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Why Do You Need This New Edition?

If you're wondering why you should buy this new edition of the *Public Speaking Handbook*, here are nine good reasons!

1. We've kept the best and improved the rest. The fourth edition of the *Public Speaking Handbook* continues its unique focus on the importance of analyzing and **considering the audience** at every point in the speech-making process, but is now an easier-to-use and more effective learning tool than ever.
2. We've streamlined the book to **18 chapters**. Chapter 1 now combines an introduction to public speaking with an overview of the audience-centered model. Chapter 7 now combines information on gathering supporting material with advice on how to integrate supporting material into a speech.
3. **New end-of-chapter Study Guides** give you easy-to-read, bulleted-list chapter summaries; key terms lists; questions to help you apply what you've learned and consider ethical dilemmas you could face; and referrals to a few good online resources.
4. **More How To boxes** make it easy to find and refer back to clear, step-by-step instructions for key skills when you are preparing your own speeches.
5. **More Quick Check boxes and tables** give you fast reviews so you can check your understanding or study for exams.
6. The fourth edition updates and expands our popular **focus on controlling speaking anxiety**, starting in Chapter 2 and continuing with tips and reminders throughout the text.
7. **New and expanded coverage of key communication theories and current research**, including studies of anxiety styles in Chapter 1, introductions to social judgment theory in Chapter 16, and emotional response theory in Chapter 17, help you apply recent theories and findings.
8. Every chapter of the fourth edition boasts engaging **fresh examples** to help you connect concepts to your own life and interests, including new references to contemporary technology such as social media sites in Chapter 3 and iPads in Chapter 14.
9. **New speeches**, including an exemplary speech by a student, contribute to an impressive sample speech appendix that will inspire you. **Annotations** now point out exactly how these sample speeches use the techniques described throughout the book—techniques you can use, too!

PEARSON

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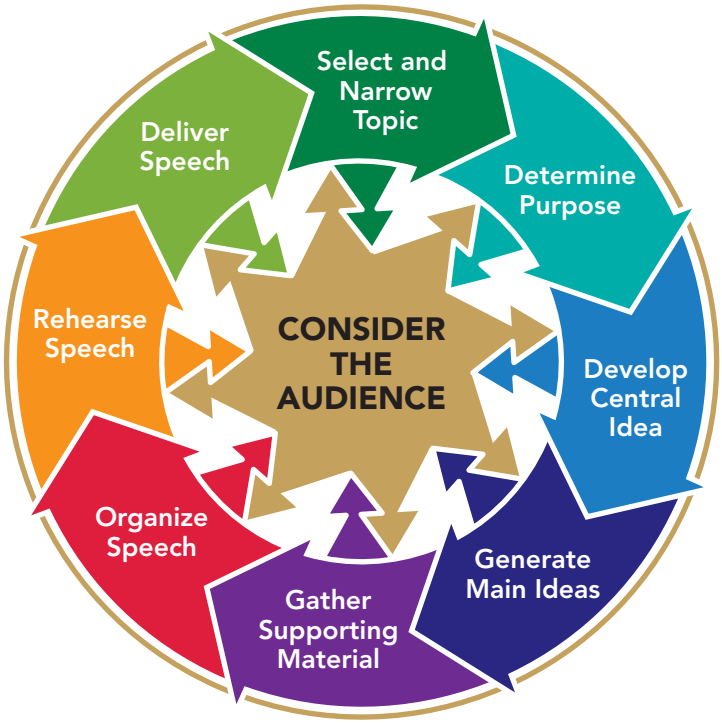

Introduction 1

1 Introduction to Public Speaking and the Audience-Centered Speaking Process
2 Speaking with Confidence
3 Speaking Freely and Ethically

Questions to Guide You Through the Introduction:

1 Introduction to Public Speaking and the Audience-Centered Speaking Process

To answer the question…	Go to page…
Why should I study public speaking?	2
How does communication take place in public speaking?	4
What is the history of public speaking?	8
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2 Speaking with Confidence

To answer the question…	Go to page…
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3 Speaking Freely and Ethically

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Introduction to Public Speaking and the Audience-Centered Speaking Process

1

"If all my talents and powers were to be taken from me by some inscrutable Providence, and I had my choice of keeping but one, I would unhesitatingly ask to be allowed to keep the Power of Speaking, for through it, I would quickly recover all the rest"

—Daniel Webster

OUTLINE

1.a Why Study Public Speaking
- Empowerment
- Employment

1.b Public Speaking as a Communication Process
- Communication During Public Speaking and Conversation
- Communication as Action
- Communication as Interaction
- Communication as Transaction

1.c The Rich Heritage of Public Speaking
- Public Speaking Throughout Western History
- Public Speaking Throughout U.S. History
- Public Speaking Today

1.d An Overview of Audience-Centered Public Speaking
- Consider Your Audience
- Select and Narrow Your Topic
- Determine Your Purpose
- Develop Your Central Idea
- Generate the Main Ideas
- Gather Supporting Material
- Organize Your Speech
- Rehearse Your Speech
- Deliver Your Speech

Perhaps you think you have heard this speaker—or even taken a class from him:

> His eyes were buried in his script. His words in monotone emerged haltingly from behind his mustache, losing volume as they were sifted through hair. Audiences rushed to see and hear him, and after they had satisfied their eyes, they closed their ears. Ultimately, they turned to small talk among themselves while the great man droned on.[1]

The speaker described here in such an unflattering way is none other than Albert Einstein. Sadly, although the great physicist could attract an audience with his reputation, he could not sustain their attention and interest because he lacked good public-speaking skills.

Public speaking is the process of presenting a message to an audience, small or large. Nearly a half million college students each year take a public speaking class, and two-thirds of those students have had little or no public-speaking experience.[2]

The good news is that this book and this course will provide you with the knowledge and experience you need to become what Einstein was not: a competent public speaker. Right now, however, gaining that experience might seem less like an opportunity and more like a daunting task. Why undertake it?

1.a Why Study Public Speaking?

You hear speeches almost every day when watching the news, listening to an instructor's lecture, or viewing a late-night comedian. But you might still wonder why it's important for you to study public speaking. Here are two reasons: By studying public speaking, you will gain long-term advantages related to *empowerment* and *employment*.

Empowerment

The ability to speak with competence and confidence will provide **empowerment**. To be empowered is to have the resources, information, and attitudes that allow you to take action to achieve a desired goal.

Being a skilled public speaker will give you an edge that other, less skilled communicators lack—even those who may have superior ideas, training, or experience. It will position you for greater things. Former presidential speechwriter James Humes, who labels public speaking "the language of leadership," says, "Every time you have to speak—whether it's in an auditorium, in a company conference room, or even at your own desk—you are auditioning for leadership."[3] You feel truly empowered when you speak with confidence, knowing that your ideas are being expressed with conviction and assurance. And being an empowered speaker can open not only leadership, but also career, opportunities for you.

Employment

It was industrialist Charles M. Schwab who said, "I'll pay more for a person's ability to speak and express himself than for any other quality he might possess."[4] If you can

speak well, you possess a skill that others will value highly. Whether you're employed as an entry-level employee or aspire to the highest rung of the corporate leadership ladder, being able to communicate effectively with others is key to success in any line of work. The skills that you learn in a public-speaking course, such as how to ethically adapt information to listeners, organize your ideas, persuade others, and hold listeners' attention, are among the skills that are most sought by employers. In a nationwide survey, prospective employers of college graduates said that they seek candidates with "public-speaking and presentation ability."[5] Other surveys of personnel managers, both in the United States and internationally, have confirmed that they consider communication skills to be the top factor in helping graduating college students to obtain employment (see Table 1.1).[6]

QUICK CHECK

Benefits of Public Speaking

1. The ability to speak with competence and confidence will provide *empowerment*.
2. Being able to communicative effectively with others is key to success in any line of *employment*.

TABLE 1.1 *Top Skills Valued by Employers*

Rank	Results of Survey of Personnel Directors[7]	Results of Survey of a College Career Services Department[8]	Results of Survey of Prospective Employers[9]	Survey Results Compiled from Several Research Studies[10]
1	Spoken communication skills	Communication and interpersonal skills	Communication skills	Communication skills
2	Written communication skills	Intelligence	Honesty and integrity	Analytical/research skills
3	Listening ability	Enthusiasm	Teamwork	Technical skills
4	Enthusiasm	Flexibility	Interpersonal skills	Flexibility/ adaptability
5	Technical competence	Leadership	Motivation/initiative	Interpersonal skills

1.b Public Speaking as a Communication Process

Even the earliest communication theorists recognized that all communication is a process. We'll look next at a variety of models that theorists have developed over the decades to describe the communication process. As we do, keep in mind that the skill of public speaking builds upon the same communication processes you use in your normal, everyday interactions with others. Speaking in public, however, requires you to sharpen existing communication skills and to learn and apply new ones.

Communication During Public Speaking and Conversation

There are three key differences between conversation and public speaking:

- *Public speaking is more prepared than conversation.* Although there may be times when you are asked to speak on the spur of the moment, you will usually know in advance if you will be expected to give a talk on a specific occasion. A public speaker may spend hours or even days planning and practicing his or her speech.
- *Public speaking is also more formal than conversation.* The slang or casual language that we often use in conversation is not appropriate for most public speaking. Audiences expect speakers to use standard English grammar and vocabulary. The nonverbal communication of public speakers is also more formal than nonverbal behavior in ordinary conversation.
- *Public speaking involves more clearly defined roles for the speaker and audience than conversation.* During a conversation, there is typically interaction between speaker and listener. But in public speaking, the roles of speaker and audience are more clearly defined and remain stable. Although in some cultures, a call-and-response speaker–audience interaction occurs (such as saying, "That's right" or "Amen" in response to a preacher's sermon)[11], audience members rarely interrupt or talk back to speakers during most speeches.

Communication as Action

The earliest models that communication theorists formulated were linear, suggesting a simple transfer of meaning from a sender to a receiver, as shown in Figure 1.1. Although theorists later realized that these ideas were too simplistic, early models did identify most of the elements of the communication process. We will explain each element as it relates to public speaking.

Source A public speaker is a **source** of information and ideas for an audience. The job of the source or speaker is to **encode**, or translate, the ideas and images in his or her mind into verbal or nonverbal symbols (a **code**) that an audience can recognize. The

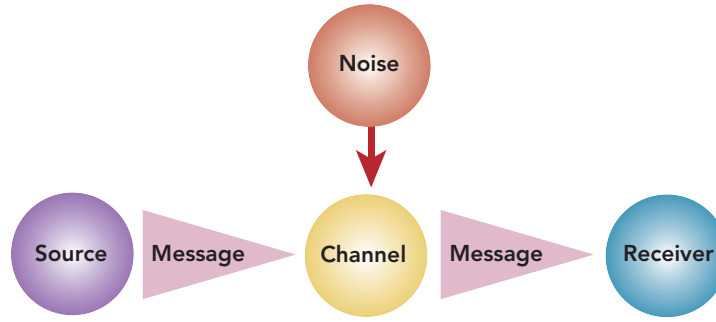

FIGURE 1.1 *A Model of Communication as Action*

speaker may encode into words (for example, saying, "The fabric should be 2 inches square") or into gestures (showing the size with his or her hands).

Message The **message** in public speaking is the speech itself—both what is said and how it is said. If a speaker has trouble finding words to convey his or her ideas or sends contradictory nonverbal symbols, listeners might not be able to **decode** the speaker's verbal and nonverbal symbols into a message.

Channels A message is usually transmitted from sender to receiver via two **channels**: *visual* and *auditory*. Audience members see the speaker and decode his or her nonverbal symbols—eye contact (or lack of it), facial expressions, posture, gestures, and dress. If the speaker uses any visual aids, such as graphs or models, these too are transmitted along the visual channel. The auditory channel opens as the speaker speaks. Then the audience members hear words and such vocal cues as inflection, rate, and voice quality.

Receiver The **receiver** of the message is the individual audience member, whose decoding of the message will depend on his or her own particular blend of past experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and values. An effective public speaker should be receiver- or audience-centered.

Noise Anything that interferes with the communication of a message is called *noise*. Noise may be physical and **external**. If your 8 A.M. public-speaking class is frequently interrupted by the roar of a lawn mower running back and forth under the window, it may be difficult to concentrate on what your instructor is saying. A noisy air conditioner, a crying baby, or incessant coughing can make it difficult for audience members to hear or concentrate on a speech.

Noise can also be **internal**. This type of noise may stem from either *physiological* or *psychological* causes and may directly affect either the source or the receiver. A bad cold (physiological noise) may cloud a speaker's memory or subdue his or her delivery. An audience member who is worried about an upcoming exam (psychological noise) is unlikely to remember much of what the speaker says. Whether it is internal or external,

whether it is physiological or psychological, or whether it originates in the sender or the receiver, noise interferes with the transmission of a message.

Communication as Interaction

Realizing that linear models were overly simplistic, later communication theorists designed models that depicted communication as a more complex process (see Figure 1.2). These models were circular, or interactive, and added two important new elements: feedback and context.

Feedback One way in which public speaking differs from casual conversation is that the public speaker does most or all of the talking. But public speaking is still interactive. Without an audience to hear and provide **feedback**, public speaking serves little purpose. Skillful public speakers are audience-centered. They depend on the nods, facial expressions, and murmurings of the audience to signal them to adjust their rate of speaking, volume, vocabulary, type and amount of supporting material, and other variables to communicate their message successfully.

Context The **context** of a public-speaking experience is the environment or situation in which the speech occurs. It includes such elements as the time, the place, and the speaker's and audience's cultural traditions and expectations. To paraphrase John Donne, no speech is an island—no speech occurs in a vacuum. Rather, each speech is a blend of circumstances that can never be replicated exactly again.

The person whose job it is to deliver an identical message to a number of different audiences at different times and in different places can attest to the uniqueness of each speaking context. If the room is hot, crowded, or poorly lit, these conditions affect both

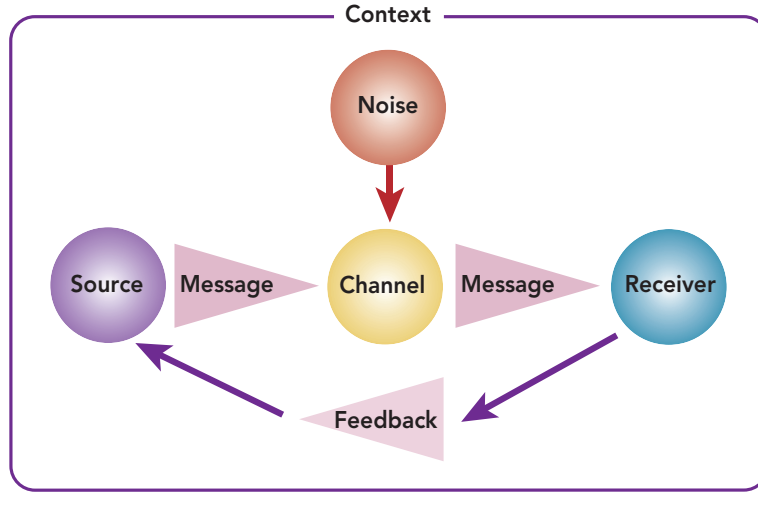

FIGURE 1.2 *An Interactive Model of Communication*

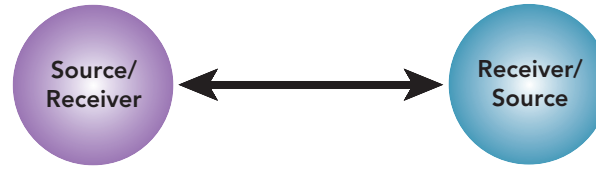

FIGURE 1.3 *A Transactive Model of Communication*

speaker and audience. The audience that hears a speaker at 10 A.M. is likely to be fresher and more receptive than a 4:30 P.M. audience. A speaker who fought rush-hour traffic for ninety minutes to arrive at his or her destination may find it difficult to muster much enthusiasm for delivering the speech.

Many of the skills that you will learn from this book relate not only to the preparation of effective speeches (messages), but also to the elements of feedback and context in the communication process. Our audience-centered approach focuses on "reading" your listeners' responses and adjusting to them as you speak.

Communication as Transaction

The most recent communication models do not label individual components. Transactive models focus instead on communication as a simultaneous process. As the model in Figure 1.3 suggests, we send and receive messages concurrently. In a two-person communication transaction, both individuals are sending and receiving at the same time. When you are listening, you are also expressing your thoughts and feelings nonverbally.

An effective public speaker should not only be focused on the message he or she is expressing, but also be tuned in to how the audience is responding to the message. A good public speaker shouldn't wait until a speech is over to gauge its effectiveness but, because of the transactive nature of communication, should be scanning the audience during the speech for nonverbal clues to the audience's reaction.

Although communication models have been developed only recently, the elements of these models have long been recognized as the keys to successful public speaking. As you study public speaking, you will continue a tradition that goes back to the very beginnings of Western civilization.

QUICK CHECK

The Communication Process

- The speaker is the source of information.
- The message is the speech.
- The message is transmitted through visual and auditory channels.
- The receiver decodes the message.
- Noise (external or internal) interferes with the message.

1.c The Rich Heritage of Public Speaking

Long before the time when many people could read, they listened to public speakers. **Rhetoric** is another term for the use of words and symbols to achieve a goal. It has been a subject of study for over 2000 years. Although rhetoric is often defined as the art of speaking or writing aimed at persuading others (changing or reinforcing attitudes, beliefs, values, or behavior), you are using rhetoric whether you're informing, persuading, or even entertaining listeners, because you are trying to achieve a goal.

Public Speaking Throughout Western History

The fourth century B.C.E. was a golden age for rhetoric in the Greek Republic, where the philosopher Aristotle formulated guidelines for speakers that we still follow today. Several centuries later, as politicians and poets attracted large followings in ancient Rome, Cicero and Quintilian sought to define the qualities of the "true" orator. On a lighter note, it is said that Roman orators invented the necktie; fearing laryngitis, they wore "chin cloths" to protect their throats.[12]

By the 1400s in medieval Europe, the clergy were the most polished public speakers. People gathered eagerly to hear Martin Luther expound his Articles of Faith.

Public Speaking Throughout U.S. History

In the eighteenth century, British subjects in the American colonies listened to town criers and to the speeches of impassioned patriots of what was to become the United States. About a hundred years later, nineteenth-century audiences heard speakers such as Henry Clay and Daniel Webster debate states' rights; they listened to Frederick Douglass, Angelina Grimke, and Sojourner Truth argue for the abolition of slavery and to Lucretia Mott plead for women's suffrage; they gathered for an evening's entertainment to hear Mark Twain as he traveled the lecture circuits of the frontier.

Students of nineteenth-century public speaking spent very little time developing their own speeches. Instead, they practiced the art of **declamation**—the delivery of an already famous address. Favorite subjects for declamation included speeches by Americans such as Patrick Henry and William Jennings Bryan and British orator Edmund Burke. Collections of speeches, such as Bryan's own ten-volume set of *The World's Famous Orations*, published in 1906, were extremely popular.

Hand in hand with declamation went the study and practice of **elocution**, the expression of emotion through posture, movement, gestures, facial expression, and voice. From the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, elocution manuals, providing elaborate and specific prescriptions for effective delivery, were standard references not only in schools, but also in nearly every middle-class home in the United States.[13]

In the first half of the twentieth century, radio made it possible for people around the world to hear Franklin Delano Roosevelt decry December 7, 1941, as "a date which

will live in infamy." In the last half of the century, television was the medium through which audiences saw and heard the most stirring speeches:

- Martin Luther King Jr. proclaiming "I have a dream"
- Ronald Reagan beseeching Mikhail Gorbachev to "tear down this wall"
- Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel looking beyond the end of one millennium toward the next with "profound fear and extraordinary hope"
- Eleven-year-old Paris Jackson delivering her brief but heartfelt eulogy for her father, Michael, tearfully saying, "I just want to say, ever since I was born, Daddy has been the best father you could ever imagine. I just want to say I love him so much."

Public Speaking Today

With the twenty-first century dawned a new era of speechmaking. It was to be an era that would draw on age-old public-speaking traditions and an era in which U.S. soldiers serving in Iraq would watch their children's commencement addresses live via streaming video. And it was to be an era that would summon public speakers to meet some of the most difficult challenges in history—an era in which a U.S. president would face a nation badly shocked by the events of September 11, 2001, and assure them that "terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shattered steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve."[14] Speakers in the future will continue to draw on a long and rich heritage in addition to forging new frontiers in public speaking.

1.d An Overview of Audience-Centered Public Speaking

As you think about preparing your first speech, you might wonder, "What do I do first?" Your assignment might be to introduce yourself. Or your first assignment might be a brief informative talk—to describe something to your audience. Regardless of the specific assignment, you need some idea of how to begin. Figure 1.4 presents a diagram of the tasks involved in the speechmaking process, emphasizing the audience as the central concern at every step of the process. As shown in Table 1.2 on page 20, you'll find complete explanations of every step of this audience-centered model of public speaking in the remaining chapters of the book. Instead of reading this book from cover to cover before you give your first speech, however, you can use this chapter's overview of the steps and skills involved in giving a speech.

Consider Your Audience

In designing and delivering your speech, always make choices with your audience in mind. Audience analysis is not something you do only at the beginning of preparing

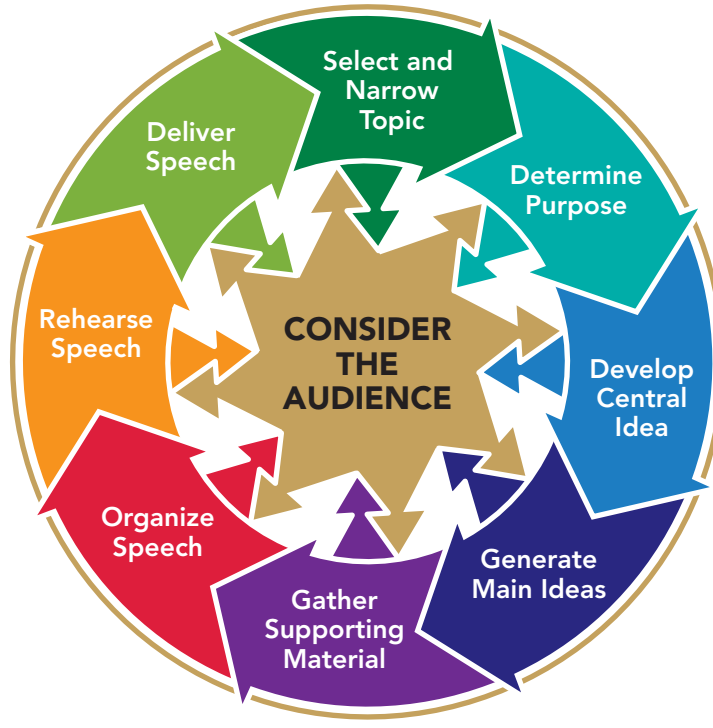

FIGURE 1.4 *This model of the speechmaking process emphasizes the importance of considering your audience as you work on each task involved in designing and presenting a speech.*

your speech. It is an ongoing activity. The needs, attitudes, beliefs, values, and other characteristics of your audience influence the choices you make about your speech at every step of the speech-preparation process. Your selection of topic, purpose, and even major ideas should be based on a thorough understanding of your listeners. In a very real sense, your audience "writes" the speech.[15]

That's why, in the model in Figure 1.4, arrows connect the center of the diagram with each step of the process. At any point during the process, you might need to revise your thinking or your material if you learn new information about your audience. So the arrows from each step in the process also point back to the center.

Gather and Analyze Information about Your Audience Being audience-centered involves making decisions about the content and delivery of your speech *before* you speak, based on knowledge of your audience's values, beliefs, and knowledge. It also means being aware of your audience's responses *during* the speech so that you can make appropriate adjustments.

To do that, you need to first identify and then analyze information about your listeners. You will be able to determine some basic information just by looking at members

of your speech class, such as approximately how old they are and the percentage of men and women. You also know that they are all students in a public-speaking class. To determine other, less obvious information, you might need to ask them questions or design a short questionnaire.

Consider the Culturally Diverse Backgrounds of Your Audience You need not give speeches in foreign countries to recognize the importance of adapting to different cultural expectations of individual audience members. People in the United States are highly diverse in culture, age, ethnicity, and religious tradition. Consider the various cultural backgrounds of your classmates. Several years ago, the typical college student was likely to be a recent high school graduate between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one. Today, your classmates probably reflect a much wider range of ages, backgrounds, and experiences. You will want to adjust not only your delivery style but also your topic, pattern of organization, and the examples you use, according to who your audience members are and in what subject or subjects they are interested.

Being sensitive to your audience and adapting your message accordingly will serve you well, not only when you are addressing listeners with different cultural backgrounds from your own but in all types of situations. If you learn to analyze your audience and adapt to their expectations, you can apply these skills in numerous settings: at a job interview, during a business presentation or city council election campaign—even while proposing marriage.

Select and Narrow Your Topic

While keeping your audience foremost in mind, your next task is to determine what you will talk about, and to limit your topic to fit the constraints of your speaking assignment. Pay special attention to the guidelines your instructor gives you for your assignment.

If your first speech assignment is to introduce yourself, your **speech topic** has been selected for you: You are the topic. It is not uncommon to be asked to speak on a specific subject. Often, though, the task of selecting and narrowing a topic will be yours. The three questions in the How To box can help you to pick a topic. For more help, study Chapter 6, in which we discuss topic selection in more detail. Appendix B also offers you some specific speech topics ideas.

It's a good idea to give yourself plenty of time to select and narrow your topic. Don't wait until the last minute to ponder what you might talk about. One of the most important things you can do to be an effective speaker is to start preparing your speech well in advance of your speaking date. One research study identified some very practical advice: The amount of time you spend preparing for your speech is one of the best predictors of a good grade on your speech.[16]

Determine Your Purpose

You might think that once you have your topic, you are ready to start the research process. Before you do that, however, you need to decide on both a general and a specific purpose.

HOW TO

Pick a Speech Topic

Choosing or finding a topic on which to speak can be frustrating. "What should I talk about?" can become a haunting question. Although there is no single answer to the question of what you should talk about, you can discover a topic by asking three standard questions:

1. **Who is the audience?** Your topic may grow from basic knowledge about your audience. For example, if you know that your audience members are primarily between the ages of 25 and 40, you might try to select a topic of interest to people who are probably working and either seeking partners or raising families.
2. **What are my interests, talents, and experiences?** Your choice of major in college, your job, your hobbies, and your ancestry are sources for topic ideas. Issues about which you feel strongly or want to learn can also sometimes make good speech topics.
3. **What is the occasion?** The occasion for which the audience has gathered may suggest some topics to you or may prohibit you from discussing certain topics. A speech to your class, for example, probably calls for a different topic than does a speech to a religious group, a model railroad club, or a city council meeting. Consider the physical setting of your speech as well as any time limits, too.

Determine Your General Purpose

Your **general purpose** is the overarching goal of your speech. There are three general purposes for speeches: *to inform, to persuade,* and *to entertain*.

- *Speaking to inform.* When you inform, you teach, define, illustrate, clarify, or elaborate on a topic. The primary objective of class lectures, seminars, and workshops is to inform. Chapter 15 will show you how to construct an effective speech with an informative purpose.
- *Speaking to persuade.* A speech to persuade seeks to change or reinforce listeners' attitudes, beliefs, values, or behavior. Ads on TV, the radio, and the Internet; sermons; political speeches; and sales presentations are examples of speeches designed to persuade. To be a skilled persuader, you need to be sensitive to your audience's attitudes toward you and your topic. In Chapters 16 and 17, we will discuss principles and strategies for preparing persuasive speeches.
- *Speaking to entertain.* To entertain listeners is the third general purpose of a speech. After-dinner speeches and comic monologues are mainly intended as entertainment. As we describe in Chapter 18, the key to an effective entertaining speech often lies in your choice of stories, examples, and illustrations as well as in your delivery.

Determine Your Specific Purpose

Your **specific purpose** is a concise statement indicating what you want your listeners to be able to do, remember, or feel when you have finished your speech. A specific purpose statement identifies the audience response you desire. You can use the instructions in the How To box to develop a specific-purpose statement.

HOW TO

Develop a Specific Purpose

Your specific purpose should be a fine-tuned, audience-centered goal. State your specific purpose in terms of what you would like the audience to be able to *do* by the end of the speech. In fact, we recommend that all specific purposes start with the same words: *At the end of my speech, the audience will …*

Your specific purpose adds detail to your general purpose:

- *For an informative speech*, you may simply want your audience to restate an idea, define new words, or identify, describe, or illustrate something. "At the end of my speech, the class will be able to identify three counseling facilities on campus and describe the best way to get help at each one."
- *For a persuasive speech*, you may try to rouse your listeners to take a class, buy something, or vote for someone. "At the end of my speech, the audience will visit the counseling facilities on campus."
- *For a speech meant to entertain*, you may want your audience to feel some positive emotions. "At the end of my speech, the audience will be amused by the series of misunderstandings I created when I began making inquiries about career advisors on campus."

Once you have formulated your specific purpose, write it down on a piece of paper or a note card, and keep it before you as you gather ideas and plan your talk. As you continue to work on your speech, you might decide to modify your purpose. But if you have an objective in mind at all times as you move through the preparation stage, you will stay on track.

Develop Your Central Idea

You should now be able to write the **central idea** of your speech. Whereas your statement of a specific purpose indicates what you want your audience to do when you have finished your speech, your central idea identifies the essence of your message. Think of it as a one-sentence summary of your speech. If you met someone in the elevator after your speech and this person asked you to summarize the speech as you traveled between floors, you would be stating your central idea. Here is an example:

Topic:	The South Beach Diet
General Purpose:	To inform
Specific Purpose:	At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to identify the three key elements in the South Beach Diet.
Central Idea:	The South Beach Diet is based on reducing the amount of carbohydrates you eat, drinking more water, and increasing the amount of exercise you get.

Generate the Main Ideas

Once you have an appropriate topic, a specific purpose, and a well-worded central idea down on paper, the next task is to identify your **main ideas**. These are the major divisions of your speech, or key points that you wish to develop. The How To box shows how you can use your single central idea to generate multiple main ideas for your speech.

HOW TO

Identify the Main Ideas in Your Speech

To determine how to subdivide your central idea into key points, ask these three questions:

1. **Does the central idea have logical divisions?** If the central idea is "There are three ways to interpret the stock-market page of your local newspaper," your speech could be organized into three parts. A speech about the art of applying theatrical makeup could also be organized into three parts: eye makeup, face makeup, and hair coloring. Looking for logical divisions in your speech topic may be the simplest way to determine key points.
2. **Can you think of several reasons why the central idea is true?** If you are trying to prove a point and you have three reasons to show that your point is true, you could organize your speech around those three reasons. If you have reasons that explain that your central idea is true, you are probably presenting a persuasive speech. If your central idea is "Medicare should be expanded to include additional coverage for individuals of all ages," each major point of your speech could be a reason you think Medicare should be expanded.
3. **Can you support the central idea with a series of steps?** Speeches describing a personal experience or explaining how to build or make something can usually be organized in a step-by-step progression. Suppose your central idea is "Running for a campus office is easy to do." Your speech could be developed around a series of steps that tell your listeners what to do first, second, and third to get elected.

Your time limit, your topic, and the information gleaned from your research will determine how many major ideas will be in your speech. A three- to five-minute speech might have only two major ideas.

Gather Supporting Material

With your main idea or ideas in mind, your next job is to gather material to support them: facts, examples, definitions, and quotations from other people that illustrate, amplify, clarify, and provide evidence. Here, as always in preparing your speech, the importance of being an audience-centered speaker cannot be overemphasized. There's a saying that an ounce of illustration is worth a ton of talk. If a speech is boring, it is usually because the speaker has not chosen supporting material that is relevant or interesting to the audience. Don't just give people data; connect facts to their lives. As one sage quipped, "Data is not information any more than 50 tons of cement is a skyscraper."[17] Use the criteria in the How To box to guide you in selecting and using supporting materials.

HOW TO

Select the Best Supporting Material

Supporting material should be personal and concrete, and it should appeal to your listeners' senses.

- *Personal.* Support your ideas with stories based on your own experiences. As Don Hewitt, one of the creators of the television show *60 Minutes* revealed, one secret to his success as a communicator has been telling stories.[18] Everyone likes a good story.
- *Concrete.* Relating abstract statistics to something tangible can help to communicate your ideas more clearly. You could give your listeners an idea that snack food is a big business by saying that Frito-Lay sells 2.6 billion pounds of snack food each year, but you make your point truly memorable by adding that 2.6 billion pounds is triple the weight of the Empire State Building.[19] Or to make a point about teenagers and safe driving, you could point out that car accidents in the United States each year kill the same number of teens as would the crashes of twelve fully loaded jumbo jets.[20]
- *Appealing to the senses.* Provide vivid descriptions of things that are tangible so that your audience can visualize what you are talking about. Besides sight, supporting material can appeal to touch, hearing, smell, and taste. The more senses you trigger with words, the more interesting your talk will be. A description such as "the rough, splintery surface of weather-beaten wood" or "the sweet, cool, refreshing flavor of cherry Jell-O" evokes a sensory image.

Develop Your Research Skills

How does a public speaker find interesting and relevant supporting material? By developing good research skills. President Woodrow Wilson once admitted, "I use not only all the brains I have, but all that I can borrow." Although it is important to have good ideas, it is equally important to know how to build on existing knowledge.

In addition to becoming a skilled user of electronic and library resources, you will also learn to be on the lookout as you read, surf the Internet, watch TV, and listen to the radio for ideas, examples, illustrations, and quotations that could be used in a speech. Finally, you will learn how to gather information through interviews and written requests for information on various topics.

Gather Visual Supporting Material

For many people, seeing is believing. Besides searching for verbal forms of supporting material, you can seek visual supporting material. Almost any presentation can be enhanced by reinforcing key ideas with visual aids. Often, the most effective visual aids are the simplest: an object, a chart, a graph, a poster, a model, a map, or a person—perhaps you—to demonstrate a process or skill. Today there are many technologies, such as PowerPoint™, for displaying visual aids.

Make your visual images large enough to be seen, and allow plenty of time to prepare them; look at your audience, not your presentation aid; control your audience's attention by timing your visual displays; and keep your presentation aids simple. Always concentrate on communicating effectively with your audience, not on dazzling your listeners with glitzy presentation displays.

Organize Your Speech

A wise person once said, "If effort is organized, accomplishment follows." A clearly and logically structured speech helps your audience to understand and remember what you say. A logical structure also helps you to feel more in control of your speech, and greater control helps you to feel more comfortable while delivering your message.

Divide Your Speech Every well-prepared speech has three major divisions:

- The *introduction* helps to capture attention, serves as an overview of the speech, and provides your audience with reasons to listen to you.
- The *body* presents the main content of your speech.
- The *conclusion* summarizes your key ideas.

You might have heard this advice on how to organize a speech: "Tell them what you're going to tell them (the introduction), tell them (the body of the speech), and tell them what you told them (the conclusion)."

As a student of public speaking, you will study and learn to apply variations of this basic pattern of organization (chronological, topical, cause–effect, problem–solution) that will help your audience to understand your meaning. You will learn about previewing and summarizing—methods of oral organization that will help your audience to retain your main ideas.

Because your introduction previews your speech and your conclusion summarizes it, most public-speaking teachers recommend that you prepare your introduction and conclusion *after* you have carefully organized the body of your talk.

Outline Your Speech If you have already generated your major ideas on the basis of logical divisions, reasons, or steps, you are well on your way to developing an outline. For your first speech, you might want to adapt the simple outline format shown in the sample outline below.[21] Indicate your major ideas by Roman numerals. Use capital letters for your supporting points. Use Arabic numerals if you need to subdivide your ideas further.

SAMPLE OUTLINE

TOPIC:
How to invest money

Your instructor may assign a topic, or you may select it.

GENERAL PURPOSE:
To inform

To inform, persuade, or entertain. Your instructor will probably specify your general purpose.

SPECIFIC PURPOSE:
At the end of my speech, the audience should be able to identify two principles that will help them to better invest their money.

A clear statement indicating what your audience should be able to do after hearing your speech

CENTRAL IDEA:

Knowing the source of money, how to invest it, and how money grows can lead to increased income from wise investments.

A one-sentence summary of your talk

INTRODUCTION:

Imagine for a moment that it is the year 2055. You are 65 years old. You've just picked up your mail and opened an envelope that contains a check for $100,000! No, you didn't win the lottery. You smile as you realize your own modest investment strategy over the last fifty years has paid off handsomely.

Attention-catching opening line

Today I'd like to answer three questions that can help you become a better money manager: First, where does money come from? Second, where do you invest it? And third, how does a little money grow into a lot of money?

Preview major ideas

Knowing the answers to these three questions can literally pay big dividends for you. With only modest investments and a well-disciplined attitude, you could easily have an annual income of $100,000 or more.

Tell the audience why they should listen to you

BODY:

I. There are two sources of money. — I. Major idea
   - A. You already have some money. — A. Supporting idea
   - B. You will earn money in the future. — B. Supporting idea

II. You can do three things with a dollar. — II. Major idea
   - A. You can spend your money. — A. Supporting idea
   - B. You can lend your money to others. — B. Supporting idea
   - C. You can invest your money. — C. Supporting idea

III. Two principles can help make you rich. — III. Major idea
   - A. The "magic" of compound interest can transform pennies into millions. — A. Supporting idea
   - B. Finding the best rate of return on your money can pay big dividends. — B. Supporting idea

CONCLUSION:

Today I've identified three key aspects of effective money management: (1) knowing sources of money, (2) knowing what you can do with money, and (3) understanding money-management principles that can make you rich. Now, let's go "back to the future"! Remember the good feeling you had when you received your check for $100,000? Recall that feeling again when you are depositing your first paycheck. Remember this simple secret for accumulating wealth: Part of all I earn is money to keep. It is within your power to "go for the gold."

Summarize main ideas and restate central idea.

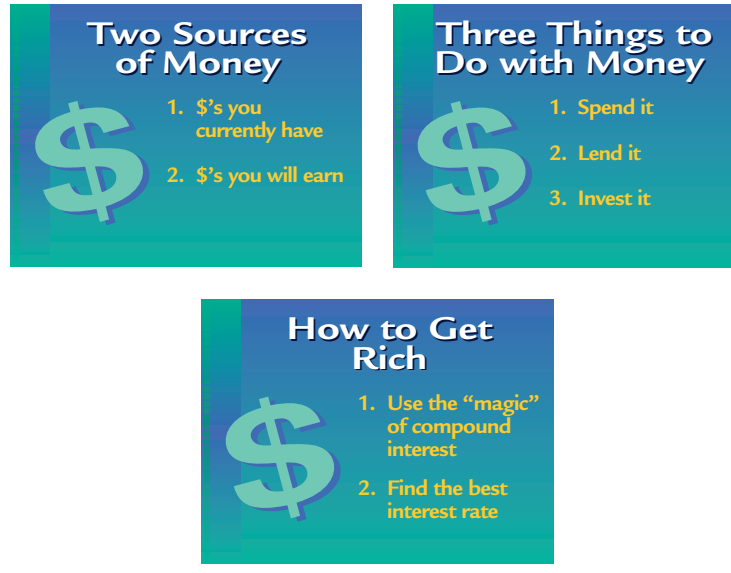

FIGURE 1.5 *Presentation Graphics for the Major Ideas in Your Speech*

Some public-speaking teachers may require a slightly different outline format. For example, your teacher might want you to outline your speech using Roman numeral I for the introduction, II for the body, and III for your conclusion. Or your instructor might want you to add more detailed information about your supporting material in outlines that you submit in class. Make sure you follow the precise guidelines your instructor provides for outlining your speech. Unless required, however, do not write your speech word for word. If you do, you will sound stilted and unnatural.

Consider Presentation Aids In addition to developing a written outline to use as you speak, consider using presentation aids to help your audience understand the structure of your speech and to clarify your major ideas. For example, you could use the three visuals shown in Figure 1.5 to help your audience understand the three major ideas in the outline just presented.

For all the steps we have discussed so far, your success as a speaker will ultimately be determined by your audience. That is why, throughout the text, we refer you to the audience-centered speechmaking model presented in this chapter.

Once you are comfortable with the structure of your talk and you have developed your visual aids, you are ready to rehearse.

Rehearse Your Speech

Remember this joke? On a street in New York, one man asks another, "How do I get to Carnegie Hall?" The answer: "Practice, man, practice." The joke may be older than Carnegie Hall itself, but it is still good advice to all beginners, including novice speakers.

A speech is a performance. As with any stage performance, whether it is music, dance, or theater, you need to rehearse. Experienced carpenters know to "measure twice, cut once." Rehearsing your speech is a way to "measure" your message so that you get it right when you present it to your audience.

Rehearse Your Speech Aloud The best way to practice is aloud, standing just as you will when you deliver your speech to your audience. As you rehearse out loud, try to find a comfortable way to phrase your ideas, but don't try to memorize your talk. In fact, if you have rehearsed your speech so many times that you are using exactly the same words every time, you have rehearsed long enough. Rehearse just enough so that you can discuss your ideas and supporting material without leaving out major parts of your speech. It is all right to use notes, but most public-speaking instructors limit the number of notes you may use.

Practice Making Eye Contact As you rehearse, practice making eye contact with your imaginary audience as often as you can. Also, be certain to speak loudly enough for all in the room to hear. If you are not sure what to do with your hands when you rehearse, just keep them at your sides. Focus on your message rather than worrying about how to gesture. Avoid jingling change with your hand in your pocket or using other gestures that could distract your audience. If you practice your speech as if you were actually delivering it, you will be a more effective speaker when you talk to the audience. And there is evidence that, like preparing early for your speech, spending time rehearsing your delivery will enhance the overall quality of your speech.[22]

Make Decisions about the Style of Your Speech Besides rehearsing your physical delivery, you also will decide about the style of your speech. "Style," said novelist Jonathan Swift, "is proper words in proper places." The words that you choose and your arrangement of those words make up the style of your speech. As we have said, some audiences respond to a style that is simple and informal. Others prefer a grand and highly poetic style. To be a good speaker, you must become familiar with the language your listeners are used to hearing and must know how to select the right word or phrase to communicate an idea. Work to develop an ear for how words will sound to your audience.

Deliver Your Speech

The time has come, and you're ready to present your speech to your audience. Delivery is the final step in the preparation process. Before you walk to the front of the room, look at your listeners to see whether the audience that has assembled is what you were expecting. Are the people out there of the age, race, and gender that you had predicted? Or do you need to make last-minute changes in your message to adjust to a different mix of audience members?

When you are introduced, walk calmly and confidently to the front of the room, establish eye contact with your audience, smile naturally, and deliver your attention-

catching opening sentence. Concentrate on your message and your audience. Deliver your speech in a conversational style, and try to establish rapport with your listeners. Deliver your speech just as you rehearsed it before your imaginary audience: Maintain eye contact, speak loudly enough to be heard, and use some natural variations in pitch. Finally, remember the advice of columnist Ann Landers: "Be sincere, be brief, and be seated."

Table 1.2 summarizes this chapter's introduction to the audience-centered speaking process and refers you to later chapters for in-depth information about each step. For a model of many attributes of a well-crafted message that we have discussed, read the speech by student Pao Yang Lee on pages 21–22.[23]

TABLE 1.2 *An Overview of the Public-Speaking Process*

Public Speaking Step	What to Do	For More Information
1. Consider the Audience	• Gather information about your audience. • Analyze the information to help you make choices about every aspect of preparing and presenting your speech.	Chapter 5: Analyzing Your Audience
2. Select and Narrow Your Topic	To select a good speech topic, consider • Your audience • Your own interests • The specific occasion when you will be speaking	Chapter 6: Developing Your Speech
3. Determine Your Purpose	• Determine whether your general purpose is to inform, to persuade, or to entertain. • Decide on your specific purpose—what you want your audience to be able to do when you finish you speech.	Chapter 6: Developing Your Speech Chapter 15: Speaking to Inform Chapter 16: Understanding Principles of Persuasive Speaking Chapter 17: Using Persuasive Strategies
4. Develop Your Central Idea	Develop a one-sentence summary of your speech.	Chapter 6: Developing Your Speech
5. Generate Your Main Ideas	Identify your major ideas by determining whether your central idea has logical divisions, reasons why it is true, or steps.	Chapter 6: Developing Your Speech
6. Gather Supporting Material	Conduct research to identify useful and interesting stories, descriptions, definitions, statistics, analogies, and opinions that support your major ideas.	Chapter 7: Gathering and Using Supporting Material

7. Organize Your Speech	• Develop your introduction, body, and conclusion. • Use signposts and transitions to clarify your organization.	Chapter 8: Organizing Your Speech Chapter 9: Introducing Your Speech Chapter 10: Concluding Your Speech Chapter 11: Outlining and Editing Your Speech
8. Rehearse Your Speech	• Prepare your speaking notes, and practice using them well in advance of your speaking date. • Practice your speech out loud, standing as you would stand while delivering your speech. • Develop appropriate and useful presentation aids.	Chapter 12: Using Words Well Chapter 13: Delivering Your Speech Chapter 14: Designing and Using Presentation Aids
9. Deliver Your Speech	• Adjust your message to the audience if necessary. • Maintain good eye contact. • Use appropriate gestures and posture. • Use appropriate vocal volume and variation.	Chapter 13: Delivering Your Speech

SAMPLE SPEECH

OUR IMMIGRATION STORY

by Pao Yang Lee

Each one of us has our own story, a history of our lives that helps explain who we are and what motivates us to be the best we can be. My story starts with my parents. Most of our parents worked hard to raise us and get us an education. Today, I'm going to share with you a part of my story. I will tell you about my parents' struggle to leave Laos and a refugee camp in Thailand and about our new life in America.

Pao captures his listeners' attention by telling them about his parents' struggle to leave Laos.

I will start my story with my parents' struggle to leave Laos to make their way to Thailand. As most of you know, many Hmong people had escaped Laos because they were being persecuted by the Communists and had to escape for their lives and freedom. My parents, who hadn't met yet, each took their journey across the Mekong River on a bamboo raft. My parents were lucky. They made it across to Thailand. According to my Dad, about a thousand Hmong people died making that exact journey. My parents' stories merged at a refugee camp in Thailand. In Thailand, although they had escaped with their lives, their lives did not improve much because the camp that the Hmong people were put in when they came to Thailand was in very poor condition. My parents met at the refugee camp in Bon Vinai a couple months after they arrived in Thailand. My Dad asked for my Mom's hand in marriage. At that

He sets the scene and provides a preview of what will be presented; audience members know that more details about the journey will be forthcoming, so they tune in to listen.

The speech is organized chronologically. Pao uses a step-by-step arrangement to describe the events that occurred.

time, my parents were very young. They didn't have any support from anybody. I was born in the refugee camp in Bon Vinai, February 18, 1980. Six months after I was born, we were sponsored by an American family, which allowed us to come to the United States.

The next chapter in our story continues in America, where each of us has our own challenge. My Dad had the most responsibility when it came to supporting our family. He knew it was important to get an education, so he started attending college. However, shortly after our arrival, my sisters were born. To make ends meet, my Dad had to drop out of college and work full time to support us all. My Mom also struggled with all the new aspects of her life. For example, in Laos, where she used to live, there wasn't any machine that would wash your clothes. However, in the United States, there are machines that will wash clothes for you. Another thing that she struggled with was using other appliances as well. Being able to operate the machine and use it properly was the hardest thing for my Mom because she wasn't able to read the directions. Probably the biggest struggle for my Mom was learning how to speak English and understand the language. It is interesting when people can't understand you, they think you're stupid. But we are the people who speak the second language.

Note how Pao signals a new idea by using the transition phrase "The next chapter in our story. . . ."

Revealing personal details and information adds interest to a story and holds listeners' attention.

Like my Mother and Father, I had my own challenge. I had to live in both cultures at the same time. At school, I was trying to fit in by learning the rules about how to act. While at home, I was trying to be respectful to the Hmong custom and language. This is a very difficult thing to do. It was also difficult for me to be a translator for my parents. I was just a little kid and was expected to translate an adult conversation. I was also expected to be there for my parents whenever they needed me.

Now I'm able to see my life as a part of a bigger picture—a bigger story. I have learned that you have to work hard to succeed in life. Coming from a first-generation family in the United States, I have lived through and seen the struggle that my parents went through to raise my siblings and me.

As Pao concludes his speech, he summarizes by noting the "bigger story," or the implications of what he has learned. Speeches based on personal experiences are enhanced if the speaker can draw some concluding point or idea from the story.

Well, today I told you a little bit about my story, a part of my ancestry that has helped make me who I am. It is a story that has been repeated by 90,000 Hmong people in the United States. As you have taken the journey with my parents from Laos, to Thailand, and to America, I hope you will be able to think of your own stories and how they have brought us to this present place and time, to learn and grow together.

The speech ends with a concise summary of the major idea. Pao also invites the audience to relate his story to their own lives.

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STUDY GUIDE

Remember These Main Ideas

- Public-speaking skills can empower you. They can also help you to secure employment or advance your career.
- Communication is action; a speaker is a *source* who *encodes* information and ideas into a *message*, presented through visual and auditory *channels*, for the *receivers* in an audience.
- Communication is interaction; it involves feedback and takes place in a context.
- Communication is transaction; we send messages at same time we receive them.
- Anything that interferes with the communication of a message is called noise.
- Your study of public speaking can be guided by a rich history of other speakers' experience and knowledge.
- In designing and delivering your speech, always make choices with your audience in mind.
- Gather and analyze information about your audience. Base your selection of topic, purpose, and even major ideas on this information.
- To select and narrow a topic, ask yourself three questions: Who is the audience? What are my interests, talents, and experiences? What is the occasion?
- The three general purposes for speeches are to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. Your specific purpose statement tells what your listeners should be able to do after your speech.
- Your central idea is a one-sentence summary of your speech. To divide the central idea into main ideas, look for logical division, reasons the central idea is true, or a series of steps.
- Gather materials to support your speech from electronic and library resources. Make sure your supporting material is personal and concrete and that it appeals to your listener's senses. Appropriate visual aids can also support your presentation.
- Every well-prepared speech has an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. Develop a written outline to help you organize your speech.
- Rehearse aloud, standing and practicing eye contact with your audience. As you deliver the speech, concentrate on your audience and message, and try to develop a rapport with your listeners.

Understand These Key Terms

central idea (p. 13)
channels (p. 5)
code (p. 4)
context (p. 6)
declamation (p. 8)
decode (p. 5)
elocution (p. 8)
empowerment (p. 2)
encode (p. 4)
external noise (p. 5)
feedback (p. 6)
general purpose (p. 12)
internal noise (p. 5)
main ideas (p. 14)
message (p. 5)
public speaking (p. 2)
receiver (p. 5)
rhetoric (p. 8)
source (p. 4)
specific purpose (p. 12)
speech topic (p. 11)

Think about These Questions

- How do you think this course in public speaking can help you with your career goals? With your personal life?
- Give an example of internal noise that is affecting you as you read this question.
- Declamation is defined as "the delivery of an already famous address." Is it ethical to deliver a speech that was written and/or already delivered by someone else? Explain your answer.
- One of your friends took a public-speaking course last year and still has a file of speech outlines. Because you will give the speech yourself, is it ethical to use one of your friend's outlines as a basis for your speech? Explain.
- Shara Yobonski is preparing to address the city council in an effort to tell the members about the Food for Friendship program she has organized in her neighborhood. What steps should she follow to prepare and deliver an effective speech?

Learn More Online

MySpeechLab

The publisher of this book provides a wealth of study resources and speech preparation tools to help you throughout your course in public speaking.

www.myspeechlab.com (access code required)

Speaking with Confidence 2

"The mind is a wonderful thing. It starts working the minute you're born and never stops . . . until you stand up to speak in public."

—George Jessel

OUTLINE

2.a Understand Your Nervousness
- Your Psychology Affects Your Biology
- Your Biology Affects Your Psychology
- Your Apprehension Follows a Predictable Pattern

2.b Build Your Confidence
- Know Your Audience
- Don't Procrastinate
- Select an Appropriate Topic
- Be Prepared
- Be Organized
- Know Your Introduction and Your Conclusion
- Make Practice Real
- Breathe
- Channel Your Nervous Energy
- Visualize Your Success
- Give Yourself a Mental Pep Talk
- Focus on Your Message, Not Your Fear
- Look for Positive Support
- Focus on Your Accomplishment, Not Your Fear
- Seek Speaking Opportunities

Perhaps public speaking is a required class for you, but because of the anxiety you feel when you deliver a speech, you've put it off as long as possible.

The first bit of comfort we offer is this: *It's normal to be nervous*. In a survey seeking to identify people's phobias, public speaking ranked as the most anxiety-producing experience most people face. Forty-one percent of all respondents reported public speaking as their most significant fear; fear of death ranked only sixth![1] On the basis of these statistics, comedian Jerry Seinfeld suggests, "Given a choice, at a funeral most of us would rather be the one in the coffin than the one giving the eulogy." Other studies have found that more than 80 percent of the population feels anxious when they speak to an audience.[2] Some people find public speaking quite frightening; studies suggest that about 20 percent of all college students are highly apprehensive about speaking in front of others.[3]

You may also find comfort in knowing you are not alone in experiencing speech anxiety. President John F. Kennedy and former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill were both noted for their superb public-speaking skills. When they spoke, they seemed perfectly at ease. Amazingly, both Kennedy and Churchill were extremely fearful of speaking in public. The list of famous people who admit to feeling nervous before they speak may surprise you: Katie Couric, Conan O'Brien, Jay Leno, Carly Simon, and Oprah Winfrey have all reported feeling anxious and jittery before they speak in public.[4] Almost everyone experiences some anxiety when speaking in public.

The main comfort we offer, however is this: You can learn positive approaches that allow your nervousness to work *for you*.[5] In fact, that is the goal of this chapter. Because an understanding of why you feel apprehensive is a good starting point on the journey to speaking with greater confidence,[6] we will first help you to understand why you become nervous. Then we will offer specific strategies to help you speak with greater comfort and less anxiety.

2.a Understand Your Nervousness

What makes you feel nervous about speaking in public? Why do your hands sometimes shake, your knees quiver, your stomach flutter, and your voice seem to go up an octave? What is happening to you? Believe it or not, these symptoms are the result of your brain trying to help you. When your brain becomes aware of your stress when you are speaking, it signals your body to help you with this difficult task. Sometimes, however, this assistance is not useful because your brain offers more "help" than you need.

Your Psychology Affects Your Biology

Your view of the speaking assignment, your perception of your speaking skill, and your self-esteem interact to create anxiety.[7] Researchers found that among the causes of anxiety about public speaking were fear of humiliation, concern about not being prepared, worry about one's looks, pressure to perform, personal insecurity, concern that the audience wouldn't be interested in the speaker or the speech, lack of experience, fear of making mistakes, and an overall fear of failure.[8] Another study found that

men are likely to experience more anxiety than women are when speaking to people from a culture different from their own.[9] As you read the list, you probably found a reason that resonated with you. Most people feel some nervousness when they speak before others. As we've said, you're not alone if you are apprehensive about giving a speech.[10]

Whatever the specific reason, your brain is presented with a conflict. You want to do well, but you're not sure that you can or will. In response, the brain triggers your body to summon more energy to deal with the conflict. Your breathing rate increases, you pump more adrenaline, and you rush more blood through your veins.[11] Your brain has switched your body to its default fight-or-flight mode: You can either fight to respond to the challenge or flee to avoid the cause of the anxiety. Other physiological changes that you may feel because of this psychological state are a more rapid heartbeat, shaking knees and hands, a quivering voice, and increased perspiration.[12] You may experience butterflies in your stomach because of changes in your digestive system. As a result of your physical discomfort, you may make less eye contact with your audience, use more vocalized pauses (such as "Um," "Ah," or "You know"), and speak too rapidly. Although you see your physical responses as hindrances, your body is simply trying to help you with the task at hand.

Your Biology Affects Your Psychology

Increasingly, researchers are concluding that communication apprehension may have a long-term genetic, biological basis. Some people may inherit a tendency to feel anxious about speaking in public.[13] Some researchers have concluded that public-speaking apprehension is both a *trait* (a characteristic or general tendency that you may have) and a *state* (anxiety triggered by the specific incidence of giving a speech to an audience).[14] You might wonder, "So if I have a biological tendency to feel nervous, is there anything I can do to help manage my fear?" The answer is *yes*. Even if you are predisposed to feel nervous because of your genetic makeup, there are strategies that you can use to help manage your apprehension. We discuss many of these strategies in the rest of this chapter. In the meantime, the How To box shows that what you've learned in just these first few pages can already help you.

HOW TO

Make Your Understanding of Anxiety Work for You

Don't let your initial anxiety convince you that you cannot speak effectively. Use what you now know to manage your fear and anxiety by keeping in mind the following observations:

- *You are going to feel more nervous than you look.* Many students are surprised when classmates reveal that they felt shaky while giving their speeches. If you worry that you are going to appear nervous to others, you may, in fact, *increase* your anxiety. Your body will exhibit more physical changes to deal with your self-induced state of anxiety. Instead, consciously remind yourself that your audience cannot see evidence of everything you feel.

- *You can't make it go away.* It is unrealistic to try to eliminate speech anxiety. Instead, your goal should be to manage your nervousness so that it does not create so much internal noise that it keeps you from speaking effectively.
- *You can rename anxiety to tame it.* Your heightened state of readiness can actually help you to speak better, especially if you view the public-speaking event positively instead of negatively. Extra adrenaline, increased blood flow, pupil dilation, increased endorphins to block pain, increased heart rate, and other physical changes caused by anxiety improve your energy level and help you to function better than you might otherwise. You are more likely to gain the benefits of the extra help your brain is trying to give you if you label your increased feelings of physiological arousal as "enthusiasm" or "excitement" than if you label the same increased arousal negatively, as "nervousness."

Your Apprehension Follows a Predictable Pattern

Research suggests that many people feel most nervous right before they give their speech, as shown in Figure 2.1.[15] If you're typical, you'll feel the second-highest level of anxiety when your instructor explains the speech assignment. You'll probably feel the least anxiety when you're preparing your speech.

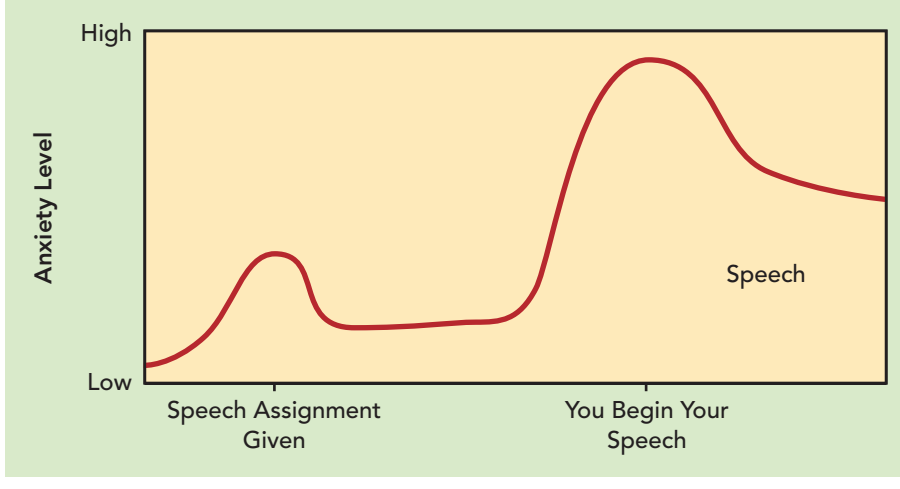


FIGURE 2.1 *Many public speakers feel the most nervous right before their speech begins, with anxiety tapering off as the speech continues. Students may also feel a smaller peak of worry when their instructor assigns them to give a speech.*

One practical application of this research is that now you can understand when you'll need the most help managing your anxiety: right before you speak. It will also help to remember that as you begin speaking, anxiety begins to decrease—often dramatically. You'll feel less anxious about your speech when you're doing something positive to prepare for it. Don't put off working on your speech; if you prepare well in advance, you'll not only have a better speech, you'll also feel less anxious about presenting it.

To identify patterns in how people experience communication apprehension, one researcher measured speakers' heart rates when they were delivering speeches and also asked them several questions about their fear of speaking.[16] After studying the results, he identified four styles of communication apprehension:

- *Average.* With this style, you have a generally positive approach to communicating in public; your overall heart rate when speaking publicly is in the average range. Speakers with this style rated their own speaking performance the highest.
- *Insensitive.* This is likely to be your style only if you have had previous experience in public speaking. Perhaps because of your experience, you tend to be less sensitive to apprehension when you speak; you have a lower heart rate when speaking, and you rate your performance as moderately successful.
- *Inflexible.* You have the highest heart rate when speaking publicly. Some people use this high and inflexible level of anxiety to enhance their performance. Their fear motivates them to prepare and be at their best. For others, the anxiety of the inflexible style creates so much tension that their speaking performance is diminished.
- *Confrontational.* You have a very high heart rate as you begin presenting a speech, and then your heart rate tapers off to more average levels. This style occurred in people who reported a strong emotional or affective response to speaking and was characteristic of more experienced speakers or people with at least some public-speaking background.

Knowing what style of communication apprehension you have can help you in at least three ways:

- It may help to know that you are not alone in how you experience apprehension and that others likely share your feelings.
- Having a general idea of your own style may give you greater insight into how to better manage your apprehension. For example, if you know that your apprehension tends to spike upward at the very beginning of speaking to an audience (the confrontational style), you will need to draw on strategies to help manage your anxiety at the outset of your talk.
- The research on apprehension styles lends support to the theory that communication apprehension may be a genetic trait or tendency.[17] That doesn't mean that there's nothing you can do to manage your anxiety; what it does mean is that, depending on your own tendencies, you may need more information to help you develop constructive ways of managing your apprehension. Read on, because we next discuss a variety of ways to build your confidence.

QUICK CHECK

Understand Your Nervousness

Keep in mind:

- Nervousness is your brain trying to help you.
- Nervousness is predictable.
- You'll feel more nervous than you look.
- You are not alone.
- It's normal to be nervous.
- You can relabel and use your feelings to your advantage.

2.b Build Your Confidence

"Is there anything I can do to help manage my nervousness and anxiety when I give a speech?" you may wonder. Both contemporary research and centuries of experience from seasoned public speakers suggest some practical advice.[18]

Know Your Audience

Know to whom you will be speaking, and learn as much about your audience as you can. The more you can anticipate the kind of reaction your listeners will have to your speech, the more comfortable you will be in delivering your message.[19] As you are preparing your speech, periodically visualize your listeners' response to your message. Consider their needs, goals, and hopes as you prepare your message. Be audience-centered rather than speaker-centered. Don't keep telling yourself how nervous you are going to be.[20] An audience-centered speaker focuses on connecting to listeners rather than focusing on fear.

Don't Procrastinate

One research study confirmed what you probably already know: Speakers who are more apprehensive about speaking put off working on their speeches, in contrast to speakers who are less anxious about public speaking.[21] The lack of thorough preparation often results in a poorer speech performance, reinforcing the speaker's perception that public speaking is difficult. Realize that if you fear that you'll be nervous when speaking, you'll tend to put off working on your speech. Take charge by tackling the speech assignment early, giving yourself every chance to be successful. Don't let your fear freeze you into inaction. Prepare early.

Select an Appropriate Topic

You will feel less nervous if you talk about something with which you are familiar or with which you have some personal experience. Judy Shepard describes her college public-speaking course as her "worst nightmare."[22] But since her gay son Matthew Shepard was brutally murdered in 1998, she has become an ardent proponent of gay rights and speaks frequently at conferences.[23] Talking about something you are passionate about can boost your motivation and help you to manage your fear. Your comfort with the subject of your speech will be reflected in your delivery. In Chapter 6, we offer more detailed guidance about how to select a topic.

Be Prepared

One formula applies to most speaking situations you are likely to experience: The better prepared you are, the less anxiety you will experience. Being prepared means that you have researched your topic and practiced your speech several times before you deliver it. One research study found clear evidence that rehearsing the speech reduces the speaker's apprehension.[24]

Be Organized

Being prepared also means that you have developed a logically coherent outline rather than one that is disorganized and difficult to follow. Transitional phrases and summaries can help you to present a well-structured, easy-to-understand message. One of the key skills you'll learn in this handbook is the value of developing a well-organized message. For most North American listeners, speeches should have a beginning, a middle, and an end and should follow a logical outline pattern. Communication researcher Melanie Booth-Butterfield suggests that speakers can better manage their apprehension if they rely on the rules and structures of a speaking assignment, including following a clear outline pattern, when preparing and delivering a speech. In her research, anxiety about a speech assignment decreased and confidence increased when speakers closely followed the directions and rules for developing a speech.[25] So to help manage your apprehension about speaking, listen carefully to what the specific assignment is, ask for additional information if you're unclear about the task, and develop a well-organized message.

Know Your Introduction and Your Conclusion

As we have seen, you are likely to feel the most anxious during the opening moments of your speech. Therefore, it is a good idea to have a clear plan for how you will start your speech. We aren't suggesting that you memorize your introduction word for word, but you should have it well in mind. Being familiar with your introduction will help you to feel more comfortable about the entire speech. If you also know how you will end your speech, you will have a safe harbor in case you lose your place. If you need to end your speech prematurely, a well-delivered conclusion can permit you to make a graceful exit.

Make Practice Real

When you practice your speech, imagine that you are giving the speech to the audience you will actually address. Stand up. Picture what the room looks like, or consider rehearsing in the room in which you will deliver your speech. What will you be wearing? Practice rising from your seat, walking to the front of the room, and beginning your speech. Practice aloud rather than just saying the speech to yourself. A realistic rehearsal will increase your confidence when your moment to speak arrives.

Breathe

Nervous speakers tend to take short, shallow breaths. To help break this anxiety-induced breathing pattern, consider taking a few slow, deep breaths before you rise to speak. No one will be able to detect that you are taking deep breaths if you just slowly inhale and exhale. Besides breathing deeply, try to relax your entire body. Deep breathing and visualizing yourself as successful will help you to relax.

Channel Your Nervous Energy

One common symptom of being nervous is shaking hands and wobbly knees. As we noted earlier, what triggers this jiggling is the extra boost of adrenaline your body is giving you, and the resulting energy that has to go somewhere. Your muscles may move whether you intend them to or not. Take control by channeling that energy. Use the techniques in the How To box to help you.

As you are waiting to be introduced, focus on remaining calm. Act calm to feel calm. Give yourself a pep talk; tense and release your muscles to help you relax. Then, when your name is called, walk to the front of the room in a calm and collected manner.

HOW TO

Channel Your Energy

- To release tension, take a leisurely walk once you arrive wherever you will be speaking. A slow, relaxing walk can help to calm you down and use up some of your excess energy.
- When you are seated and waiting to speak, grab the edge of your chair (without calling attention to what you are doing) and gently squeeze the chair to release tension. No one needs to know you're doing this—just squeeze and relax, squeeze and relax.
- You can also purposely tense and then release the muscles in your legs and arms while you're seated. You don't need to look as though you're going into convulsions; just imperceptibly tense and relax your muscles to burn energy.
- One more tip: Keep both feet on the floor and gently wiggle your toes rather than sitting with your legs crossed. Crossing your legs can sometimes cause one leg or foot to go to sleep. Keeping your feet on the floor and slightly moving your toes can ensure that all of you will be wide awake and ready to go when it's your turn to speak.

Before you present your attention-catching opening sentence, take a moment to look for a friendly, supportive face. Think calm and act calm to feel calm.

Visualize Your Success

Studies suggest that one of the best ways to control anxiety is to imagine a scene in which you exhibit skill and comfort as a public speaker.[26] As you imagine giving your speech, picture yourself walking confidently to the front of the room and delivering your well-prepared opening remarks. Visualize yourself giving the entire speech as a controlled, confident speaker. Imagine yourself calm and in command. Positive visualization is effective because it boosts your confidence by helping you to see yourself as a more confident, accomplished speaker.[27] Research has found that it is even helpful to look at a picture of someone confidently and calmly delivering a speech while visualizing yourself giving the speech; such positive visualization helps you to manage your apprehension.[28] It's helpful if the visual image you're looking at is a person you can identify with—someone who looks like you or someone you believe is more like you than not.[29] But you could even make a simple drawing of someone speaking confidently.[30] What's important is that as you look at the image, you imagine that it's you confidently giving the speech.

Give Yourself a Mental Pep Talk

You might think that people who talk to themselves are slightly loony. But silently giving yourself a pep talk can give you confidence and take your mind off your nervousness. There is some evidence that simply believing that a technique can reduce your apprehension may, in fact, help reduce your apprehension.[31] Giving yourself a positive message such as "I can do this" can be a productive way to manage your anxiety. Here's a sample mental speech that you could deliver to yourself right before you speak: "I know this stuff better than anyone else. I've practiced it. My message is well organized. I know I can do it. I'll do a good job." Research provides evidence that people who entertain thoughts of worry and failure don't do themselves any favors.[32] When you feel yourself getting nervous, use positive messages to replace negative thoughts that may creep into your consciousness. Consider these examples:

Negative Thought	Positive Self-Talk
I'm going to forget what I'm supposed to say.	I've practiced this speech many times. I've got notes to prompt me. If I lose my place, no one will know I'm not following my outline.
So many people are looking at me.	I can do this! My listeners want me to do a good job. I'll seek out friendly faces when I feel nervous.

People think I'm dull and boring.	I've got some good examples. I can talk to people one-on-one, and people seem to like me.
I just can't go through with this.	I've talked to people all my life. I've given presentations in classes for years. I can get through this because I've rehearsed and I'm prepared.

Focus on Your Message, Not Your Fear

The more you think about being anxious about speaking, the more you will increase your level of anxiety. Instead, think about what you are going to say. In the few minutes before you address your listeners, mentally review your major ideas, your introduction, and your conclusion. Focus on your ideas rather than on your fear.

Look for Positive Support

Evidence suggests that if you think you see audience members looking critical of you or your message, you may feel more apprehensive and nervous when you speak.[33] Stated more positively, when you are aware of positive audience support, you will feel more confident and less nervous. To reiterate our previous advice: It is important to be audience-centered. Although you may face some audiences who won't respond positively to you or your message, the overwhelming majority of listeners will be positive. Read the How To box to learn how you and your public-speaking classmates can support one another.

HOW TO

Get and Give Support in Public-Speaking Class

One study found that speakers experienced less apprehension if they had a support group or a small "learning community" that provided positive feedback and reinforcement.[34] This finding has implications for you as a speaker and listener.

- *Join a study group.* When you have a speaking assignment, work with others to provide support both as you prepare and when you present your speech.
- *Listen supportively.* When you're listening to speakers in your communication class, help them by providing eye contact and positive nonverbal support, such as nodding in agreement and maintaining a positive, sincere facial expression.
- *Empathize with other students' anxieties.* Providing positive supportive feedback is especially important when you know that a speaker is quite nervous. Try to understand what might make your classmates anxious. For example, one study found that nonnative speakers may feel anxious and nervous because English is not their native language.[35]

You can help your fellow students feel more comfortable as speakers, and they can do the same for you. Watch for their support.

Focus on Your Accomplishment, Not Your Fear

When you conclude your speech, you may be tempted to fixate on your fear. You might amplify in your own mind the nervousness you felt and think everyone could see how nervous you looked. Resist that temptation. When you finish your speech, tell yourself something positive to celebrate your accomplishment. Say to yourself, "I did it! I spoke, and people listened." Don't replay your mental image of yourself as nervous and fearful. Instead, mentally replay your success in communicating with your listeners.

Seek Speaking Opportunities

The more experience you gain as a public speaker, the less nervous you will feel.[36] This course in public speaking will give you opportunities to enhance both your confidence and your skill through frequent practice. Researchers have found that speakers who were the most nervous at the beginning of a public-speaking class experienced the greatest decreases in nervousness by the end of the class.[37] Another research study found that students who took a basic public-speaking course reported having less apprehension and more satisfaction about speaking than did students who had not taken such a course.[38] To add to the practice you will get in this class, consider joining clubs and organizations such as Toastmasters, an organization dedicated to improving public-speaking skills by providing a supportive group of people to help you polish your speaking and overcome your anxiety. As you develop a track record of successfully delivering speeches, you will find that you have more confidence.[39]

QUICK CHECK

Build Your Confidence

- Be audience-centered. Prepare your speech early.
- View the public-speaking event positively.
- Prepare your speech early, and be well organized.
- Select an appropriate topic, and focus on your message, not on your fear.
- Rehearse out loud, and know your introduction and conclusion.
- Visualize your success, and give yourself a mental pep talk.
- Channel your nervous energy, and use deep-breathing techniques.
- Look for positive listener support.
- Accept lots of speaking opportunities.

STUDY GUIDE

Remember These Main Ideas

- Your view of the speaking assignment, your perception of your speaking skill, and your self-esteem interact to create anxiety.
- Your brain responds to anxiety by triggering the flight-or-fight response. This heightened readiness for action can actually help you to speak better.
- Some people are genetically predisposed to be more nervous than others, but it's normal for most people to be nervous about public speaking.
- You have a predictable style of speaking apprehension, which can help you to figure out ways to cope with your nervousness.
- To help manage your apprehension, be prepared and know your audience; consider their needs, goals, and hopes as you choose an appropriate topic and prepare your message. Be audience-centered rather than speaker-centered.
- Don't put off working on your speech; the better prepared and more organized you are, the less anxiety you will experience.
- Select a topic with which you feel comfortable, so that you can focus on your ideas rather than on your fear.
- Organize your speech well, and be especially familiar with your introduction and conclusion.
- Re-create the speech environment when you rehearse.
- Just before you speak, channel nervous energy and use relaxation techniques, positive visualization, and positive verbal reinforcement.
- Look for positive listener support as you speak. Consider creating a support group among your classmates.
- When you finish your speech, tell yourself something positive to celebrate your accomplishment.
- Seek speaking opportunities. Practice builds confidence.

Think about This Question

- Mike Roberts, president of his fraternity, is preparing to address the university academic council in an effort to persuade council members to support establishment of a Greek housing zone on campus. This is his first major task as president, and he is understandably nervous about his responsibility. What advice would you give to help him manage his nervousness?

Learn More Online

Take a quiz to assess your communication apprehension at www.jamescmccroskey.com/measures/prca24.htm.

For tips on managing nervousness, visit www.school-for-champions.com/speaking/fear.htm and http://www.speechcoachforexecutives.com/speech_anxiety.html.

Speaking Freely and Ethically

3

"Free speech not only lives, it rocks!"

—Oprah Winfrey

OUTLINE

3.a Introduction to Ethics
What Are Ethics?
How Do Public Speakers Use Ethics?

3.b Speaking Freely
Free Speech and the U.S. Constitution
Free Speech in the Twentieth Century
Free Speech in the Twenty-First Century

3.c Speaking Ethically
Have a Clear, Responsible Goal
Use Sound Evidence and Reasoning
Be Sensitive to and Tolerant of Differences
Be Honest
Don't Plagiarize

3.d Speaking Credibly

In July 2009, a popular radio host in Austin, Texas, known for his sarcastic humor, used on the air an "insulting and highly offensive" ethnic slur.[1] Radio station KLBJ cancelled the offender's show, suspended him for two weeks without pay, and permanently removed him from the air. When a station manager announced these actions to the local newspaper, he acknowledged, "There will be members of the community who feel we did not do enough and I think there might be members of the community who feel we did too much." The reason for the difference in public opinion? Although the radio host exercised his *right* to free speech, he did not exercise his *ethical responsibility*.

3.a Introduction to Ethics

In the United States, the right to speak freely goes hand in hand with the responsibility to speak ethically.

What Are Ethics?

Ethics are the beliefs, values, and moral principles by which people determine what is right or wrong. Some ethical values appear to be universal, or nearly so. For example, the major world religions have remarkably similar moral codes for how people should treat others.[2] For Christians, the Golden Rule—"Do unto others as you would have others do unto you"—is a fundamental value. Buddhism teaches a similar value: "One should seek for others the happiness one desires for oneself." Hinduism asks adherents to live by the precept "Do nothing to others which would cause pain if done to you." Judaism teaches, "What is hateful to you, do not do to others." And Islam declares, "No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself."

Although the underlying ethic of how to treat others is fundamental to the world's religions, other ethical principals may reflect cultural norms, professional standards, or individual beliefs or values.

Ethics serve as criteria for many of the decisions we make in our personal and professional lives and for our judgments of others' behavior. The student who refuses to cheat on a test, the employee who will not call in sick to gain an extra day of vacation, and the property owner who does not claim more storm damage than she actually suffered have all made choices based on ethics.

We read and hear about ethical issues every day in the media. Cloning and drug testing have engendered heated ethical debates among medical professionals. Advertising by some attorneys has incensed those who believe that it has resulted in an overall increase in frivolous litigation that is tarnishing the profession. And in the political arena, debates about reforms of social programs, fiscal responsibility, and the regulation of business and industry all hinge on ethical issues.

How Do Public Speakers Use Ethics?

Although you are undoubtedly familiar with many ethical issues, you may have given less thought to ethics in public speaking. These center on one main concern: In a country in which **free speech** is protected by law, the right to speak freely must be balanced by the responsibility to speak ethically. In 1999, the National Communication Association developed a Credo for Communication Ethics, which emphasizes the fundamental nature and far-reaching impact of ethical communication:

> Ethical communication is fundamental to responsible thinking, decision making, and the development of relationships and communities within and across contexts, cultures, channels, and media. Moreover, ethical communication enhances human worth and dignity by fostering truthfulness, fairness, responsibility, personal integrity, and respect for self and others.[3]

Ethical considerations should guide every step of the public-speaking process. As you determine the goal of your speech, outline your arguments, and select your evidence, think about the beliefs, values, and morals of your audience as well as your own. Ethical public speaking is inherently audience-centered, always taking into account the needs and rights of the listeners.

In our discussion of speaking freely and ethically, we will turn first to free speech—both its protection and its restriction by law and public policy. Then we will discuss the ethical practice of free speech by speakers and listeners, providing guidelines to help you balance your right to free speech with your responsibilities as an audience-centered speaker and as a critical listener. Within this framework, we will define and discuss plagiarism, one of the most troublesome violations of public-speaking ethics.

3.b Speaking Freely

In April 2007, CBS radio fired controversial talk-radio host Don Imus for derogatory comments he had made on the air about members of the Rutgers University women's basketball team. In a commencement address at Queen's College two months later, author Susan Isaacs questioned the firing. "He is pretty much a pig," Isaacs agreed. "But the demands for his ouster were wrong." She went on to explain,

> If you get rid of one talk show host, next to go is an offensive comedy show such as South Park, shock jock Howard Stern and conservative host Rush Limbaugh. Then it's your turn (to be quieted).[4]

While critical of Imus's *ethics*, Isaacs nevertheless defended his right to *free speech*.

Free Speech and the U.S. Constitution

In 1791, the **First Amendment** to the U.S. Constitution was written to guarantee that "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech." In the more than

200 years since then, entities as varied as state legislatures, colleges and universities, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the federal courts have sought to define through both law and public policy the phrase *freedom of speech*.

Only a few years after the ratification of the First Amendment, Congress passed the Sedition Act, providing punishment for those who spoke out against the government. When both Thomas Jefferson and James Madison declared this act unconstitutional, however, it was allowed to lapse.

Free Speech in the Twentieth Century

During World War I, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it was lawful to restrict speech that presented "a clear and present danger" to the nation. This decision led to the founding, in 1920, of the American Civil Liberties Union, the first organization formed to protect free speech. In 1940, Congress declared it illegal to urge the violent overthrow of the federal government. However, even as they heard the hate speech employed by Hitler and the Nazis, U.S. courts and lawmakers argued that only by protecting free speech could the United States protect the rights of minorities and the disenfranchised. For most of the last half of the twentieth century, the U.S. Supreme Court continued to protect rather than to limit free speech, upholding it as "the core aspect of democracy."[5]

In 1964, the Supreme Court narrowed the definition of slander, or false speech that harms someone. The Court ruled that before a public official can recover damages for slander, he or she must prove that the slanderous statement was made with "actual malice."[6] Another boost for free speech occurred in 1964, not in the courts but on a university campus. In December of that year, more than one thousand students at the University of California in Berkeley took over three floors of Sproul Hall to protest the recent arrest of outspoken student activists. The Berkeley Free Speech Movement that arose from the incident permanently changed the political climate of U.S. college campuses. In a written statement on the thirty-year anniversary of the protest, Berkeley's vice chancellor, Carol Christ, wrote, "Today it is difficult to imagine life in a university where there are serious restrictions on the rights of political advocacy."[7]

Free speech gained protection in the last two decades of the twentieth century, during which the Supreme Court found "virtually all attempts to restrain speech in advance … unconstitutional," regardless of how hateful or disgusting the speech may seem to some.[8] In 1989, the Supreme Court defended the burning of the U.S. flag as a "**speech act**" protected by the First Amendment. In 1997, the Court struck down the highly controversial federal Communications Decency Act of 1996, which had imposed penalties for creating, transmitting, or receiving obscene material on the Internet. The Court ruled that "the interest in encouraging freedom of expression in a democratic society outweighs any theoretical but unproven benefit of censorship."[9]

Perhaps no recent test of free speech received more publicity than the sensational 1998 lawsuit brought by four Texas cattlemen against popular talk-show host Oprah Winfrey. In a 1996 televised show on "mad cow disease," Winfrey had declared that she would never eat another hamburger. Charging that her statement caused cattle prices to plummet, the cattlemen sued for damages; however, Winfrey's attorneys successfully argued that the case was an important test of free speech. Emerging from the courtroom

after the verdict in her favor, Winfrey shouted, "My reaction is that free speech not only lives, it rocks!"[10]

Free Speech in the Twenty-First Century

One month after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, the pendulum again swung toward restriction of free speech with the passage of the Patriot Act, which broadened the investigative powers of government agencies. Not surprisingly, the Patriot Act has been roundly criticized by various civil rights, free speech, and publishing groups. One coalition of such groups described the Patriot Act as "the latest in a long line of abuses of rights in times of conflict."[11]

> It is ironic that even as Americans debate the restrictions imposed by the Patriot Act, they recognize and offer restitution for historical infringement on free speech. In May 2006, Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer formally pardoned seventy-eight late citizens of Montana who had been imprisoned or fined under the Montana Sedition Act of 1918, convictions that "violated basic American rights of speech."[12]

The pendulum swung back in June 2010, when the exercise of free speech created controversy for and hastened the retirement of veteran White House correspondent Helen Thomas. Asked by a rabbi to comment on Israel, Thomas responded that the Israelis should get out of Palestine. Although Thomas later both apologized and resigned from the White House press corps, her right to free speech was upheld by former CBS News foreign correspondent Terry Phillips, who noted wryly, "Apparently, journalists are now only willing to defend free speech when it is safe."[13]

The Quick Check reviews the history of the First Amendment. There can be little doubt that in the months and years to come, the United States will continue to debate "the balance among national security, free speech, and patriotism."[14]

QUICK CHECK

History of Free Speech in the United States

1791	First Amendment guarantees that "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech."
1798	Sedition Act is passed (expired in 1801).
1919	U.S. Supreme Court rules that speech presenting "a clear and present danger" may be restricted.
1920	American Civil Liberties Union is formed.
1940	Congress declares it illegal to urge the violent overthrow of the federal government.
1964	U.S. Supreme Court restricts definition of slander; Berkeley Free Speech Movement is born.
1989	U.S. Supreme Court defends the burning of the U.S. flag as a "speech act."
1997	U.S. Supreme Court strikes down Communications Decency Act of 1996, in defense of free speech on the Internet.

(*continued*)

(*continued*)

1998	Oprah Winfrey successfully defends her right to speak freely on television.
2001	September 11 terrorist attacks spark passage of the Patriot Act and new debate over the balance between national security and free speech.
2006	State of Montana pardons those convicted under the Montana Sedition Act of 1918.
2010	White House Correspondent Helen Thomas retires amid controversy over what some saw as her exercise of free speech.

3.c Speaking Ethically

As the boundaries of free speech expand, the importance of **ethical speech** increases. Although there is no definitive ethical creed for a public speaker, teachers and practitioners of public speaking generally agree that an ethical speaker is one who has a clear, responsible goal; uses sound evidence and reasoning; is sensitive to and tolerant of differences; is honest; and avoids plagiarism. In the discussion that follows, we offer suggestions for observing these ethical guidelines.

Have a Clear, Responsible Goal

The goal of a public speech should be clear to the audience. For example, if you are trying to convince the audience that your beliefs on abortion are more correct than those of others, you should say so at some point in your speech. If you keep your true agenda hidden, you violate your listeners' rights. In addition, an ethical goal should be socially responsible. A socially responsible goal is one that gives the listener choices, whereas an irresponsible, unethical goal is psychologically coercive. Adolf Hitler's speeches, which incited the German people to hatred and genocide, were coercive, as were those of Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, who tried to intimidate Chinese citizens into revealing the whereabouts of leaders of the unsuccessful 1989 student uprising in Tiananmen Square.

If your overall objective is to inform or persuade, it is probably ethical; if your goal is to coerce or manipulate, it is unethical. But lawyers and ethicists do not always agree on this distinction. As we have pointed out, Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court have at times limited speech that incites sedition, violence, and riot, but they have also protected free speech rights "for both the ideas that people cherish and the thoughts they hate."[15] Even those who defend a broad legal right to free speech recognize that they are defending the right to unethical, as well as ethical, speech. For example, faculty, administrators, and regents of the University of Colorado have for years debated the case of ethnic studies professor Ward Churchill, who, immediately following the 2001 terrorist attacks, compared some of those who died at the World Trade Center to Holocaust architect Adolf Eichmann. Even as the university's president and the governor of Colorado recommended Churchill's dismissal, others staunchly defended his right to speak freely.[16]

Use Sound Evidence and Reasoning

Ethical speakers use critical-thinking skills such as analysis and evaluation to draw conclusions and formulate arguments. Unethical speakers substitute false claims and manipulation of emotion for evidence and logical arguments. In the early 1950s, Wisconsin senator Joseph McCarthy incited national panic by charging that Communists were infiltrating every avenue of American life. Thousands of people came under suspicion, and many lost jobs and careers because of the false accusations. Never able to substantiate his claims, McCarthy nevertheless succeeded in his witch hunt by exaggerating and distorting the truth. One United Press reporter noted, "The man just talked in circles. Everything was by inference, allusion, never a concrete statement of fact. Most of it didn't make sense."[17] Although today we recognize the flimsiness of McCarthy's accusations, in his time, the man wielded incredible power. Like Hitler, McCarthy knew how to manipulate emotions and fears to produce the results he wanted. It is sometimes tempting to resort to false claims to gain power over others, but it is always unethical to do so.

Some speakers bypass sound evidence and reasoning in order to make their conclusions more provocative. One contemporary rhetoric scholar offers the following example of such short-circuited reasoning:

> Let's say two people are observing who speaks in college classrooms and they come up with
>
> 1. Women are not as good at public speaking as men.
> 2. In college classes on coed campuses where most professors are male, women tend to talk less in class than men.[18]

The first conclusion, based on insufficient evidence, reinforces sexist stereotypes with an inflammatory overgeneralization. The second, more qualified conclusion is more ethical.

One last, but important, requirement for the ethical use of evidence and reasoning is to share with an audience all information that might help them reach a sound decision, including information that may be potentially damaging to your case. Even if you proceed to refute the opposing evidence and arguments, you have fulfilled your ethical responsibility by presenting the perspective of the other side. And you can actually make your own arguments more convincing by anticipating and answering counterarguments and evidence.

Be Sensitive to and Tolerant of Differences

> The filmmaker who ate nothing but McDonald's meals for his Oscar-nominated movie *Super Size Me* apologized for a profanity-laced, politically incorrect speech at a suburban Philadelphia school.
>
> Among other things, Morgan Spurlock joked about the intelligence of McDonald's employees and teachers smoking pot while he was speaking at Hatboro-Horsham High School.
>
> Spurlock, 35, told *The Philadelphia Inquirer* in a telephone interview that he "didn't think of the audience" and could have chosen his words better.[19]

Being audience-centered requires that you become as aware as possible of other people's feelings, needs, interests, and backgrounds. Spurlock clearly violated this ethical principal in his remarks.

Sensitivity to differences, sometimes called **accommodation**, does not mean that speakers must abandon their own convictions or pander to those of their audience members. It does mean that speakers should demonstrate a willingness to listen to opposing viewpoints and learn about different beliefs and values. Such willingness not only communicates respect; it can also help a speaker to select a topic, formulate a purpose, and design strategies to motivate an audience.

Your authors are currently involved in an informal educational exchange with a professor from the St. Petersburg Cultural Institute in Russia, and we had a chance to meet the professor and her family in St. Petersburg. In talking with the professor's talented teenage daughter, we inquired about her plans after she finished her university education. Smiling at us in both amusement and amazement, she replied, "Americans are always planning what they are going to do several years in the future. In Russia, we do not plan beyond two or three weeks. Life is too uncertain here." Having gained this insight into Russian life, we know now that it would raise false hopes or be dismissed as irrelevant if we were to attempt to motivate Russian audiences with promises of benefits far in the future. Our new understanding helps us see that speaking of immediate, deliverable rewards is a more realistic and ethical approach to communication with our Russian friends, but it has broader implications as well. DePaul University communication professor Kathy Fitzpatrick notes, "Our success in public diplomacy will turn on our ability to speak in ways that recognize and appreciate how [our audiences] will interpret our messages."[20]

A speaker who is sensitive to differences also avoids language that might be interpreted as being in any way biased or offensive. Although it might seem fairly simple and a matter of common sense to avoid overtly abusive language, it is not so easy to avoid language that discriminates more subtly. In Chapter 12, we look at specific words and phrases that can be unintentionally offensive and that ethical speakers should avoid.

Be Honest

Knowingly offering false or misleading information to an audience is an ethical violation. In 2003, President George W. Bush and members of his staff accepted responsibility for having told the public that Iraq was getting nuclear fuel from Africa, even after intelligence reports several months earlier had discredited the claim. In 1999, Toronto Blue Jays manager Tim Johnson was fired after it was revealed that the stories he had told to his team about his combat experiences in Vietnam were false. During the war, it turned out, he actually played ball while serving with the Reserves in California.[21]

Perhaps most famously, in January 1998, then-President Bill Clinton's finger-wagging declaration that "I did not have sexual relations with that woman—Miss Lewinsky" was a serious breach of ethics that came back to haunt him. Many Americans were willing to forgive the inappropriate relationship; fewer could forgive the dishonesty.

A seeming exception to the dictum to avoid false information is the use of hypothetical illustrations—illustrations that never actually occurred but that might happen. Many speakers rely on such illustrations to clarify or enhance their speeches. As long as a speaker makes clear to the audience that the illustration is indeed hypothetical—for example, prefacing the illustration with a phrase such as "Imagine that . . . "—such use is ethical.

Honesty also requires that speakers give credit for ideas and information that are not their own. *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* states that "an author does not present the work of another as if it were his or her own work. This can extend to ideas as well as written words."[22] Presenting the words and ideas of others without crediting them is called plagiarism. This ethical violation is both serious enough and widespread enough to warrant a separate discussion.

Don't Plagiarize

Although some cultures may view unacknowledged borrowing from sources as a sign of respect and humility and an attempt to be audience-centered, in the United States and most other Western cultures, using the words, sentence structures, and/or ideas of another person without crediting the source is a serious breach of ethics. Yet even people who would never think of stealing money or shoplifting may feel justified in **plagiarizing**—stealing ideas. One student commencement speaker who plagiarized a speech by the writer Barbara Kingsolver explained his action as resulting from the "expectation to produce something amazing."[23]

Understand What Constitutes Plagiarism

Even if you have never plagiarized anything as public as a commencement address, perhaps you can remember copying a grade-school report directly from the encyclopedia, or maybe you've even purchased or "borrowed" a paper to submit for an assignment in high school or college. These are obvious forms of plagiarism. Less obvious forms include **plagiaphrasing**—lacing a speech with compelling phrases that you find in a source that you do not credit, failing to give credit to a source or adequate information in a citation, or relying too heavily on the vocabulary or sentence structure of a source.

Understand That Plagiarism May Have Significant Consequences

The Center for Academic Integrity reports that 75 percent of college students admit to having cheated at least once.[24] The Educational Testing Service has found that one Web site offering free term papers gets some eighty thousand hits per day. Ironically, at least one such site claims to provide "non-plagiarized term papers"—ironic, because using any such paper is exactly what constitutes plagiarism![25] And communication researcher Todd Holm reports that more than 50 percent of three hundred students surveyed admitted cheating in some way in a public-speaking class.[26]

Despite the near-epidemic occurrence of plagiarism, most colleges impose stiff penalties on students who plagiarize. Plagiarists almost always fail the assignment in question, frequently fail the course and are sometimes put on academic probation or even expelled. And the risk of being caught is much greater than you might suspect. Many

colleges subscribe to a Web-based plagiarism detection company such as Turnitin; other professors routinely use free detection sites such as Grammarly or even a search engine such as Google.

A few years ago, one of your authors heard an excellent student speech on the importance of detecting cancer early. The only problem was that she heard the same speech again in the following class period! On finding the "speech"—actually a *Reader's Digest* article that was several years old—both students were certain that they had discovered a surefire shortcut to an A. Instead, they failed the assignment, ruined their course grades, and lost your author's trust. The consequences of plagiarism in other arenas can be even more dire, including the loss of a job or the end of a promising career.

Do Your Own Work The most flagrant cases of plagiarism result from not doing your own work. For example, while you are poking around the library for ideas to use in a speech assignment, you might discover an entire speech or perhaps an article that could easily be made into a speech. However tempting it may be to use this material and however certain you are that no audience member could possibly have seen it, resist the urge to plagiarize. You will be cheating yourself if you do not learn how to compose a speech on your own; after all, you are in college to acquire new skills.

Another way in which speakers sometimes attempt to shortcut the speech preparation task is to ask another person to edit a speech so extensively that it becomes more that other person's work than their own. This is another form of plagiarism as well as another way in which novice speakers can cheat themselves out of the skills they need to develop.

Acknowledge Your Sources Our admonition to do your own work in no way suggests that you should not research your speeches and then share the results with audience members. In fact, an ethical speaker is responsible for doing just that. Furthermore, some information is so widely known that you do not have to acknowledge a source for it. For example, you need not credit a source if you say that a person must be infected with the HIV virus to develop AIDS or that the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919. This information is widely available in a variety of reference sources. However, if you decide to use any of the following in your speech, you must give credit to the source:

- Direct quotations, even if they are only brief phrases
- Opinions, assertions, or ideas of others, even if you paraphrase them rather than quote them verbatim
- Statistics
- Any nonoriginal visual materials, including graphs, tables, and pictures

Take Careful Notes To be able to acknowledge your sources, you must first practice careful and systematic note-taking. Indicate with quotation marks any phrases or sentences that you photocopy or copy by hand verbatim from a source, and be sure to

record the author, title, publisher or Web site, publication date, and page numbers for all sources from which you take quotations, ideas, statistics, or visual materials.

Cite Sources Correctly In addition to keeping careful records of your sources, you must know how to cite sources for your audience, both orally and in writing. Perhaps you have heard a speaker say, "Quote," while holding up both hands with index and middle fingers curved to indicate quotation marks. This is an artificial and distracting way to cite a source. As shown in the How To box, an **oral citation** can be integrated more smoothly into a speech.

HOW TO

Incorporate an Oral Citation into Your Speech

On a 2010 Web page titled *Rabies*, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention define *rabies* as

"a preventable viral disease of mammals most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal."

Provide the date.
Specify the type of resource.
Give the title.
Provide the author or source.

Pause briefly to signal that you are about to begin quoting.
Quote the source.

Pause again to indicate that you are ending the quoted passage.

You can also provide a written citation for a source. In fact, your public-speaking instructor may ask you to provide a bibliography of sources along with the outline or other written materials he or she requires for each speech. Instructors who require a bibliography will usually specify the format in which they want the citations; if they do not, you can use a style guide such as those published by the MLA (Modern Language Association) or the APA (American Psychological Association), both of which are available online as well as in traditional print format. Here is an example of a written citation in MLA format for the source cited orally in the earlier example. Notice that the citation provides two dates: the date of publication (included in the title of the article) and the date the article was accessed by the researcher. If you are unable to find the date the material was posted—or any other single element of information—proceed directly to the next item in the citation.

Rabies. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 June 2010. Web. 21 June 2010.

Perhaps now you are thinking, "What about those 'gray areas,' those times when I am not certain whether information or ideas I am presenting are common knowledge?" A good rule is this: When in doubt, document. You will never be guilty of plagiarism if you document something you didn't need to, but you could be committing plagiarism if you do not document something you really should have.

QUICK CHECK

The Ethical Public Speaker . . .

- Has a clear, responsible goal.
- Uses sound evidence and reasoning.
- Is sensitive to and tolerant of differences.
- Is honest.
- Avoids plagiarism.

3.d Speaking Credibly

Credibility is a speaker's believability. A credible speaker is one whom an audience perceives to be competent, knowledgeable, dynamic, and trustworthy. To achieve the last of these four factors—trustworthiness—you as a speaker must consistently adhere to ethical principles.

You trust people whom you believe to be ethical. In fact, the Greek rhetorician Aristotle used the term *ethos*—the root word of *ethic* and *ethical*—to refer to a speaker's credibility. Quintilian, a Roman teacher of public speaking, believed that an effective public speaker also should be a person of good character, a "good person speaking well."

We examine credibility in more detail in Chapter 5, where we discuss analyzing your audience's attitudes toward you; in Chapter 9, where we discuss establishing your credibility in your speech introduction; and in Chapters 16 and 17, where we discuss the role of credibility in persuading an audience.

For now, keep in mind that speaking ethically is one key to being perceived by your audience as a credible speaker.

STUDY GUIDE

Remember These Main Ideas

- Ethics are the beliefs, values, and moral principles by which people determine what is right or wrong.
- In a country in which free speech is protected by law, the right to speak freely must be balanced by the responsibility to speak ethically.
- Ethical public speaking is inherently audience-centered, always taking into account the needs and rights of the listeners.
- The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was written to guarantee that "Congress shall make no law … abridging the freedom of speech."
- Although Congress and the courts have occasionally limited free speech by law and policy, more often they have protected and broadened its application.
- The right to free speech has also been upheld by such organizations as the American Civil Liberties Union and by colleges and universities.
- Speakers who exercise their right to free speech are responsible for tempering what they say by applying ethics, or moral principles and values.
- Although there is no definitive standard of ethics, most people agree that to be ethical public speakers must be responsible, honest, and tolerant; use sound reasoning; and avoid plagiarism.
- Plagiarism is one of the most common violations of speech ethics. You can usually avoid plagiarizing by understanding what it is, doing your own work, and acknowledging the sources for any quotations, ideas, statistics, and visual materials you use in a speech.

Understand These Key Terms

accommodation (p. 44)
credibility (p. 48)
ethics (p. 38)
ethical speech (p. 42)
First Amendment (p. 39)
free speech (p. 39)
oral citation (p. 47)
plagiaphrasing (p. 45)
plagiarizing (p. 45)
speech act (p. 40)

Think about These Questions

- Explain how ethical behavior serves as a balance to free speech.
- Why do you think the U.S. Supreme Court has historically considered flag burning and pornography to be "free speech acts"?

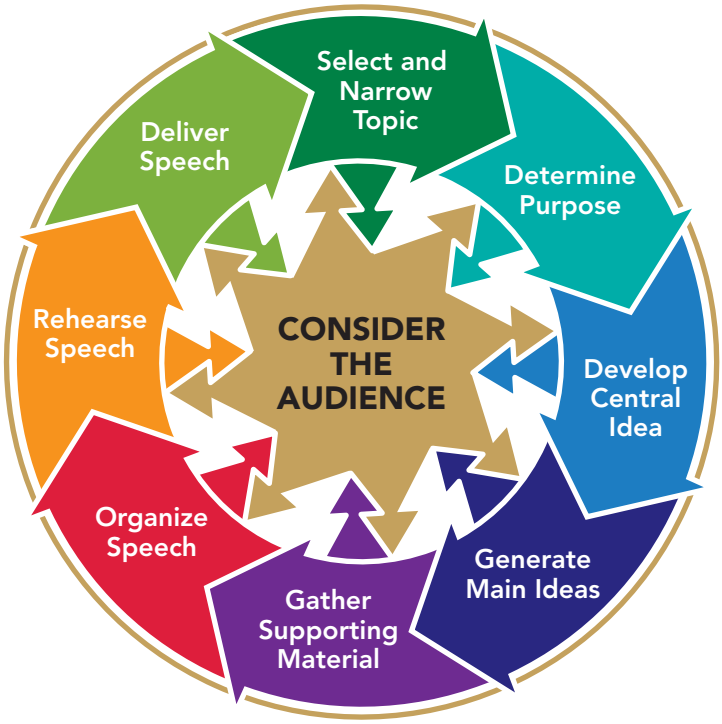
- From at least the time of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, speechwriters have written many of the best speeches made by U.S. presidents. Is such use of speechwriters ethical? Is it ethical to give credit to the presidents for memorable lines from speeches written by professional speechwriters?
- The following passage comes from the book *Abraham Lincoln, Public Speaker*, by Waldo W. Braden:

> The Second Inaugural Address, sometimes called Lincoln's Sermon on the Mount, was a concise, tightly constructed composition that did not waste words on ceremonial niceties or superficial sentiment. The shortest Presidential inaugural address up to that time, it was only 700 words long, compared to 3,700 words for the First, and required from 5 to 7 minutes to deliver.[27]
>
> Which of the following statements should be credited to Braden if you were to use them in a speech?
>
> "Lincoln's second inaugural address is sometimes called Lincoln's Sermon on the Mount."
>
> "Because he was elected and sworn in for two terms as president, Abraham Lincoln prepared and delivered two inaugural addresses."
>
> "Lincoln's second inaugural address was 700 words and 5 to 7 minutes long."

Learn More Online

The Ethics Connection Santa Clara University's Markkula Center for Applied Ethics offers you case studies in ethics, as well as advice on current and perennial ethical issues.
www.scu.edu/ethics/

The American Civil Liberties Union Defending freedom of speech is on of the major activities of the ACLU.
www.acu.org/free-speech



Analyzing an Audience 2

4 Listening to Speeches
5 Analyzing Your Audience

Questions to Guide You Through This Section:

4 Listening to Speeches

To answer the question…	Go to page…
What could keep me from listening well?	54
How can I become a better listener?	59
How can I judge the quality of arguments in a speech?	67
What should I do when I need to evaluate classmates' speeches?	70

5 Analyzing Your Audience

To answer the question…	Go to page…
How can I get information about my audience?	84
What should I look for when I analyze the information I've gathered?	87
What are some ethical ways to let the audience influence my speech?	89
What do I need to learn about the audience before my speech?	91
How can I adapt my speech while I'm talking if the audience isn't responding well?	106
How can I use audience feedback to adapt for future speeches?	111

Listening to Speeches 4

"Learn how to listen and you will prosper—even from those who talk badly."

—Plutarch

OUTLINE

4.a Effective Listening
- Select
- Attend
- Understand
- Remember
- Respond

4.b Overcoming Barriers to Effective Listening
- Managing Information Overload
- Overcoming Personal Concerns
- Reducing Outside Distractions
- Counteracting Prejudice
- Using Differences Between Speech Rate and Thought Rate
- Managing Receiver Apprehension

4.c How to Become a Better Listener
- Listen with Your Eyes as Well as Your Ears
- Listen Mindfully
- Listen Skillfully
- Listen Ethically

4.d Listening and Critical Thinking
- Separate Facts from Inferences
- Evaluate the Quality of Evidence
- Evaluate the Underlying Logic and Reasoning

4.e Analyzing and Evaluating Speeches
- Understanding Criteria for Evaluating Speeches
- Identifying and Analyzing Rhetorical Strategies
- Giving Feedback to Others
- Giving Feedback to Yourself

A psychology professor had dedicated his life to teaching and worked hard to prepare interesting lectures, yet he found his students sitting through his talks with glassy-eyed expressions.[1] To find out what was on his students' minds if they were not focusing on psychology, he would, without warning, fire a blank from a gun and then ask his students to record their thoughts at the instant they heard the shot. Here is what he found:

20 percent were pursuing erotic thoughts or sexual fantasies.

20 percent were reminiscing about something (they weren't sure what they were thinking about).

20 percent were worrying about something or thinking about lunch.

8 percent were pursuing religious thoughts.

20 percent were reportedly listening.

12 percent were able to recall what the professor was talking about when the gun fired.

Like this professor, you probably would prefer that more than 12 percent of your audience could recall your messages. Understanding how listeners listen can help you to improve your ability to connect with your audience. If you understand what holds listeners' attention as well as how to navigate around the barriers to effective listening, you can make your messages stick like Velcro rather than slip off your listener' minds like Teflon.

Considerable evidence also suggests that your own listening skills could be improved. Within twenty-four hours after listening to a lecture or speech, you will most likely recall only about 50 percent of the message. Forty-eight hours later, you are above average if you remember more than 25 percent of the message. Learning about listening can help you to improve your listening skills so that you can gain more benefits from the speeches you hear.

In this chapter, we discuss how people listen, and we identify barriers and pitfalls that keep both speakers and audiences from listening effectively. Our goal is not only to help you remember what speakers say, but also to be a more thoughtful, ethical, and critical listener to the messages you hear. We'll offer tips to improve your ability to analyze and evaluate speeches, including your own.

4.a Effective Listening

Listening is a complex process of selecting, attending to, creating meaning from, remembering, and responding to verbal and nonverbal messages. Understanding these components of listening can help you to retain more, and it can help you to be a better speaker and a better listener.

Select

To **select** a sound, the first stage of listening, is to single out a message from several competing messages. As a public speaker, your job is to develop a message that motivates listeners to focus on your message.

Attend

The sequel to selecting is attending. To **attend** to a sound is to focus on it. Most people's average attention span while listening to someone talk is about 8 seconds.[2] One of your key challenges as a public speaker is to capture and then hold your audience's attention. Your choice of supporting material is often the key to gaining and maintaining attention.

Understand

Boiled down to its essence, communication is the process of **understanding**, or making sense of our experiences and sharing that sense with others.[3] As a speaker, your job is to facilitate listener understanding by making sure you clearly explain your ideas in terms and images to which your listeners can relate. Again, the challenge of being understood comes back to a focus on the audience.

Remember

The next stage in the listening process is *remembering*. To **remember** is to recall ideas and information. You hear more than one billion words each year, but how much information do you retain? It depends on how well you listen. Most listening experts believe that the main way to determine whether audience members have been listening is to determine what they remember. (That's the purpose of taking tests in school: to assess what you remember and understand from what you've heard and read.)

Respond

The final stage in the listening process is responding. When listeners **respond**, they react with their behavior to what they have heard. That's why it's useful for public speakers to develop specific behavioral goals for their talks. As a speaker, you should identify what you would like listeners to be able to *do* after you speak. It could be that you want them simply to remember and restate your key ideas. Or you might want them to vote for someone, buy something, or enroll in a course.

QUICK CHECK

Effective Listening

To listen effectively, you need to:

- Select a message
- Attend to it
- Understand the message
- Remember it
- Respond appropriately to it

4.b Overcoming Barriers to Effective Listening

Listening barriers are created when we fail to select, attend to, or understand a message or remember what was said.

Managing Information Overload

We spend a large part of each day listening. That's good news and bad news. The good news is that because we listen a lot, we have the potential to become very effective listeners. The bad news is that instead of getting better at it, we often tune out because we hear so much information that we get tired of listening. Researchers in listening have developed what they call the **working memory theory of listening**, which explains why we sometimes just don't listen well. The theory suggests that when a listener's capacity is reached (when the working memory is full), then it's harder to concentrate and remember what is being heard.[4]

Although this theory might make it appear that there's nothing you can do as either a speaker or a listener to manage this problem, the strategies described in the How To box can both help to ensure that those who listen to you continue to attend to your message and help you improve your own listening skills.

HOW TO

Prevent Information Overload

As a listener

- *Recognize when you are not being a good listener.* Then try to improve your listening by looking at the speaker, sitting up straight, and focusing on the message.

As a speaker

- *Pace the flow of new ideas and information.* Communication expert Frank E. X. Dance recommends a 30/70 balance: 30 percent of your speaking time should be spent presenting new ideas and information, and 70 percent of your time should be spent supporting the ideas with vivid examples and interesting stories.[5]
- *Build redundancy into your message.* If listeners miss the idea the first time you present it, perhaps they will catch it during your concluding summary. Repeating key ideas can be part of that 70 percent of your message that extends the new information you present.

Overcoming Personal Concerns

You are sitting in your history class on a Friday afternoon. It's a beautiful day. You slump into your seat, open your notebook, and prepare to take notes on the lecture. As the professor talks about an upcoming assignment, you begin to think about how you are going to spend your Saturday. One thought leads to another as you mentally plan your weekend. Suddenly you hear your professor say, "For Monday's test, you will be expected to know the principles I've just reviewed." What principles? What test? You were present in class and you did *hear* the professor's lecture, but you're not sure what was said.

Your own thoughts are among the biggest competitors for your attention when you are a member of an audience. Most of us would rather listen to our own inner speech than to the message of a public speaker. As the psychology professor with the gun discovered, sex, lunch, worries, and daydreams are major distractions for the majority of listeners.

What You Can Do as a Speaker Focus on maintaining your audience's attention, using occasional "wake-up" messages such as "Now listen carefully, because this will affect your future grade (or family, or employment)." Deliver your message effectively by using good eye contact, speaking with appropriate volume and vocal variation, and using appropriate gestures for emphasis.

What You Can Do as a Listener Stay focused by stopping the mental conversation you are having with yourself about ideas that are unrelated to the speaker's message. Be aware of thoughts, worries, and daydreams that are competing for your attention. Then, once you are aware that you are off task, return your attention to what the speaker is saying.

Reducing Outside Distractions

While sitting in class, you notice that a fluorescent light is flickering overhead. Two classmates behind you are chatting about their favorite soap opera plots. Out the window,

you see a varsity football hero struggling to break into his car to retrieve the keys he left in the ignition. As your history professor drones on about the Bay of Pigs invasion, you find it difficult to focus on his lecture. Most of us don't listen well when physical distractions are competing with the speaker.

HOW TO

Minimize Outside Distractions

As a listener

- *Stay focused.* Be aware of thoughts, worries, and daydreams that are competing for your attention. Then stop these mental conversations with yourself, so that you can turn your thoughts to what the speaker is saying.
- *Help the speaker manage the environment.* You might need to close the blinds, turn up the heat, turn off the lights, close the door, or do whatever is necessary to minimize distractions. If people near you are talking, consider moving to another seat.

As a speaker

- *Empathize with your listeners.* Before your speech, sit where your audience will be seated, and look for possible distractions. Then do the best you can to reduce or eliminate those distractions.
- *Try to control the physical arrangement of the speaking situation.* Check out the room before you begin your speech. Close windows and window shades; turn off blinking fluorescent lights if you can; try to discourage whispering in the audience.

Counteracting Prejudice

Your buddy is a staunch Democrat. He rarely credits a Republican with any useful ideas. So it's not surprising that when the Republican governor of your state makes a major televised speech outlining suggestions for improving the state's sagging economy, your friend finds the presentation ludicrous. As the speech is broadcast, your buddy constantly argues against each suggestion, mumbling comments about Republicans, business interests, and robbing the poor. The next day, he is surprised to see editorials in the press praising the governor's speech. "Did they hear the same speech I did?" your friend wonders. Yes, they heard the same speech, but they listened differently. When you prejudge a message, your ability to understand it decreases.

Another way to prejudge a speech is to decide that the topic has little value for you before you even hear the message. Most of us at one time or another have not given our full attention to a speech because we decided beforehand that it was going to bore us.

Sometimes we make snap judgments about a speaker based on his or her appearance and then fail to listen because we dismiss the speaker's ideas in advance as inconsequential or irrelevant. Female speakers often complain that males in the audience do not listen to them as attentively as they would to another male; members of ethnic

and racial minorities may feel slighted in a similar way. On the flip side, some people too readily accept what someone says just because they like the way the person looks, sounds, or dresses. For example, Tex believes that anyone with a Texas drawl must be an honest person. Such positive prejudices can also inhibit your ability to listen accurately to a message.

HOW TO

Counteract Prejudice

As a listener

- *Keep your focus on the message rather than on the messenger.* Guard against becoming so critical of a message that you don't listen to it or becoming so impressed that you decide too quickly that the speaker is trustworthy.

As a speaker

- *Grab the audience's attention with your opening statements.* This helps to keep listeners from making inaccurate snap judgments based on prejudice.
- *Be clear and specific.* Avoid examples, words, or phrases that could be misinterpreted. Focus on your particular listeners' interests, needs, hopes, and wishes.
- *Use detailed arguments and credible evidence.* when addressing an audience that may be critical of or hostile toward your message. Strong emotional appeals will be less successful with a critical audience than will careful language, sound reasoning, and convincing evidence.

Using Differences Between Speech Rate and Thought Rate

Most people talk at a rate of 125 words a minute. But you have the ability to listen to up to 700 words a minute; some studies suggest that you may even be able to listen to 1,200 words a minute.[6] Regardless of the exact numbers, you have the ability to process words much faster than you generally need to. The problem is that the difference gives you time to ignore a speaker periodically. Eventually, you stop listening. Your "extra" time allows you to daydream and drift from the message. Instead of drifting away from the speech, however, you can enhance your listening effectiveness by mentally summarizing what the speaker is saying from time to time.

What You Can Do as a Speaker Be aware of your listeners' tendency to stop paying attention. If they can process your message much faster than you can say it, you need to build in message redundancy, use clear transitions, be well organized, and make your major ideas clear. Just talking faster won't do much good. Even if you could speak as fast as two hundred words a minute, your listeners would still want you to talk about four times faster than that. So develop a well-structured message that uses

appropriate internal summaries to help your listeners catch your message, even if they've tuned out for a bit here and there.

What You Can Do as a Listener Because you have the ability to think much faster than people speak, you can use that dazzling mental power to stay focused on the message. Periodically making a mental summary of what the speaker is saying can dramatically improve your ability to remember the information. The difference between speech rate and thought rate gives you time to sprinkle in several mental summaries when listening to a message.

Managing Receiver Apprehension

You already know about speaker apprehension, or the fear of speaking to others, but did you know that some people may be fearful of *listening* to information? Researchers have discovered a listening barrier called receiver apprehension. **Receiver apprehension** is fear of misunderstanding or misinterpreting, or of not being able to adjust psychologically to, messages spoken by others.[7] Some people are just uncomfortable or nervous about hearing new information; their major worry is that they won't be able to understand the message. If you are one of those people, you may have difficulty understanding all you hear because your anxiety about listening creates "noise" that can interfere with how much information you comprehend.

HOW TO

Overcome Receiver Apprehension

As a listener, if you experience receiver apprehension

- *Work harder to comprehend the information presented by others.* Summarize mentally what you hear a speaker saying during a speech, and use other comprehension tips from this chapter.
- *Use technology.* Making an audio or video recording of a lecture can help you to feel less anxious about trying to remember each point made by the speaker.[8]
- *Take accurate notes.* Knowing that you can refer to your notes later can help you to feel more comfortable about being a listener.

As a speaker, to help listeners with receiver apprehension

- *Raise your awareness.* Be mindful that some listeners may be anxious about understanding your message.
- *Be more redundant.* Offer clear previews of your main ideas. Include brief summaries as you transition from one point to the next. Summarize major ideas again at the end of your talk.[9]
- *Use presentation aids.* Summarize key ideas visually, too. For example, you can list your major points on a PowerPoint™ slide.

4.c How to Become a Better Listener

Now that we have examined barriers to effective listening and have suggested a few strategies to overcome those barriers and be both a better listener and a better speaker, we offer additional strategies for improving your listening skills. Specifically, we'll help you listen with your eyes, we'll help you be a mindful listener, and we'll note specific behaviors that can help you listen skillfully.

Listen with Your Eyes as Well as Your Ears

To listen with your eyes is to be attuned to the unspoken cues of a speaker. Nonverbal cues play a major role in communicating a message. One expert has estimated that as much as 93 percent of the emotional content of a speech is conveyed by nonverbal cues.[10] Even though this statistic does not apply in every situation, emotion is communicated primarily by unspoken messages. To "listen with your eyes," you need to accurately interpret what you see while ensuring that you don't allow yourself to be distracted by it, even if a speaker has poor delivery.

Accurately Interpret Nonverbal Messages Because the nonverbal message plays such a powerful role in affecting how you respond to a speaker, it's important to accurately interpret what a speaker is expressing nonverbally. A speaker's facial expressions will help you to identify the emotions being communicated; a speaker's posture and gestures often reinforce the intensity of the emotion.[11]

If you have trouble understanding a speaker, either because he or she speaks too softly or because he or she speaks in an unfamiliar dialect, get close enough that you can see the speaker's mouth. A good view can increase your level of attention and improve your understanding.

HOW TO

Decode Nonverbal Messages

- *Consider nonverbal cues in context.* When interpreting an unspoken message, consider the situation you and the speaker are in.
- *Look for clusters of cues.* Don't just focus on one nonverbal cue. Instead, look for several nonverbal cues to increase the accuracy of your interpretation.
- *Look for cues that communicate liking, power, and responsiveness.* Eye contact, facial expression, and body orientation can often express how much someone likes us. We note people's degree of power or influence over us by the way they dress, how much space they have around them, or whether they are relaxed or tense. People who perceive themselves as having more power than those around them are usually more relaxed. To observe whether someone is interested or focused on you, note their level of eye contact and their head nods, facial expressions, and tone of voice.

Adapt to the Speaker's Delivery

Good listeners focus on a speaker's message, not on his or her delivery style. To be a good listener, you must adapt to the particular idiosyncrasies that some speakers have. You might have to ignore or overlook a speaker's tendency to mumble, speak in a monotone, or fail to make eye contact. Perhaps more difficult still, you might even have to forgive a speaker's lack of clarity or coherence. Rather than mentally criticizing an unpolished speaker, you might need to be sympathetic and try harder to concentrate on the message. Good listeners focus on the message, not on the messenger.

Poor speakers are not the only challenge to good listening. You also need to guard against glib, well-polished speakers. Just because a speaker has an attractive style of delivery does not necessarily mean that his or her message is credible. Don't let a smooth-talking salesperson convince you to buy something without carefully considering the content of his or her message.

Listen Mindfully

To be a mindful listener is to be aware of what you are doing when listening to others. The unmindful listener is not conscious of whether he or she is paying attention or daydreaming. Skilled listeners are mentally focused on the listening task. How do you do that? Here are some specific strategies to help you be a mindful listener.

Be Aware of Whether You Are Listening or Not

Listening boils down to this: You are either on-task or off-task. Either you are either selecting and attending to a message or you're not mentally engaged with what you are hearing. What's vital, yet simple, is that you be aware of whether you are on-task or off-task when listening to someone. Two listening researchers found that good listeners do the following:[12]

- Put their own thoughts aside
- Are present mentally as well as physically
- Make a conscious, mindful effort to listen
- Invest time in listening, patiently letting the speaker make his or her point
- Are open-minded

Bad listeners do just the opposite; they are distracted by their own thoughts, are mentally absent, are impatient, and are less open to what they hear.

Monitor Your Emotional Reaction to a Message

Heightened emotions can affect your ability to understand a message. If you become angry at a word or phrase that a speaker uses, your listening comprehension decreases. Depending on their cultural backgrounds, religious convictions, and political views, listeners may become emotionally aroused by certain words. For most listeners, words that connote negative opinions about their ethnic origin, nationality, or religious views can trigger strong emotions. Cursing and obscene language are red flags for other listeners.

Yin Ping is an Asian American who has distinguished himself as a champion debater on the college debate team. One sly member of an opposing team sought to distract him by quoting a bigoted statement that disparaged Asian Americans for "taking over the country." It was tempting for Yin Ping to respond emotionally to the insult, but he kept his wits, refuted the argument, and went on to win the debate. When someone uses a word or phrase you find offensive, it's important to overcome your repugnance and continue to listen. Don't let a speaker's language close down your mind.

How can you keep your emotions in check when you hear something that sets you off? First, recognize when your emotional state is affecting your rational thoughts. Second, use the skill of self-talk to calm yourself down. Say to yourself, "I'm not going to let this anger get in the way of listening and understanding." You can also focus on your breathing for a moment to calm down.

Be a Selfish Listener Although it might sound crass to suggest it, being a selfish listener can help you to maintain your powers of concentration. If you find your attention waning, ask yourself questions such as "What's in this for me?" and "How can I use information from this talk?" Granted, you will find more useful information in some presentations than others, but be alert to the possibility in all speeches. Find ways to benefit from the information you are listening to, and try to connect it with your own experiences and needs.

Listen Skillfully

Besides being aware of nonverbal messages and being mindful listeners, good listeners enact certain behaviors that help them to stay focused and remember what they've heard. They identify their listening goal, listen for major ideas, practice good listening methods, adapt their listening style as necessary, and are active listeners.

Identify Your Listening Goal As Figure 4.1 shows, you invest a lot of your communication time in listening. If you are a typical student, you spend over 80 percent of your day involved in communication-related activities.[13] You listen a lot. Your challenge is to stay on course and keep your listening focused.

One way to stay focused is to determine your listening purpose. There are at least four major listening goals: listening for pleasure, listening to empathize, listening to evaluate, and listening to gain information. Being conscious of your listening goal can help you listen more effectively. For example, if your listening goal is simply to enjoy what you hear, you need not listen at the same intensity as when you are trying to remember what you are hearing.

Listening for Pleasure You listen to some things just for the fun of it. You might watch TV, listen to music, go to a movie, or chat with a friend. You won't be tested on *Friends* reruns. Nor will you be asked to remember every joke in David Letterman's monologue. So when listening for pleasure, just enjoy what you hear. You can, however, observe how effective speakers and entertainers gain and maintain your attention and keep you interested in their messages.

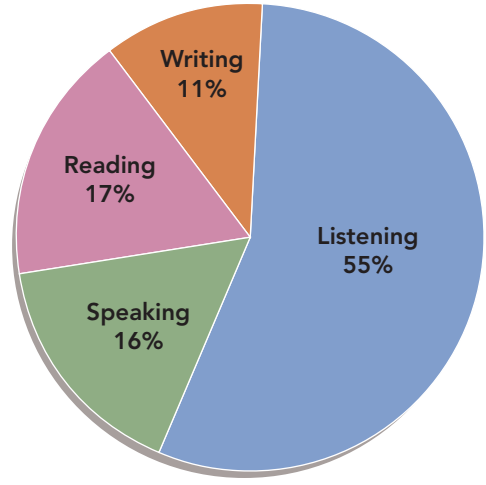


FIGURE 4.1 *You listen a lot. A typical student spends about 11% of his or her communication time writing, 17% reading, 16% speaking, and at least 55% listening.*

Listening to Empathize To have empathy means to make an attempt to feel what the speaker is feeling. Usually, empathic listening occurs in one-on-one listening situations with a good friend. Sometimes, in your job, you might need to listen empathically to a client, customer, or coworker. Listening to empathize requires these essential steps:

1. *Stop*. Stop what you are doing, and give your complete attention to the speaker.
2. *Look*. Make eye contact, and pay attention to nonverbal cues that reveal emotions.
3. *Listen*. Pay attention to both the details of the message and the major ideas.
4. *Imagine*. Visualize how you would feel if you had experienced what the speaker experienced.
5. *Check*. Check your understanding of the message by asking questions to clarify what you heard and by summarizing what you think you heard.

Listening to Evaluate When you evaluate a message, you are making a judgment about its content. You are interested in whether the information is reliable, true, or useful. When evaluating what you hear, the challenge is to not become so critical of the message that you miss a key point the speaker is making. Rather, you must juggle three very difficult tasks: You must make judgments as well as understanding and recalling the information you are hearing. Our point is this: When you are listening to a message and also evaluating it, you have to work harder than you do at other times to understand the speaker's message. Your biases and judgments act as noise, sometimes causing you to misunderstand the intended meaning of the message.

Listening for Information Since elementary school, you have been in listening situations in which someone wanted you to learn something. Keys to listening for

information are listening for the details of a message and making certain that you link the details to major ideas. Poor listeners either listen only for facts and pieces of a message or are interested only in the bottom line. By concentrating on both facts and major ideas while also mentally summarizing the information you hear, you can dramatically improve your ability to remember messages. Also, you may find it helpful to compare unfamiliar information to ideas and concepts with which you are familiar.

Listen for Major Ideas In a classic study, Ralph Nichols asked both good and poor listeners what their listening strategies were.[14] The poor listeners indicated that they listened for facts, such as names and dates. The good listeners reported that they listened for major ideas and principles. Facts are useful only when you can connect them to a principle or concept. In speeches, facts as well as examples are used primarily to support major ideas. Try to mentally summarize the major idea that the specific facts support.

If you heard President Barack Obama deliver his inaugural address in Washington, D.C., on the cold morning of January 20, 2009, you heard him introduce his key idea about two minutes into his speech: "On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord." A good listener would recognize this statement immediately as the core of the speech.

How can you tell what the major ideas in a speech are? A speaker who is well organized or familiar with good speaking techniques will offer a preview of the major ideas early in the speech. If no preview is provided, listen for the speaker to enumerate major points: "My first point is that the history of Jackson County is evident in its various styles of architecture." Transitional phrases and a speaker's internal summaries are other clues that can help you to identify the major points. If your speaker provides few overt indicators, you might have to discover them on your own. In that event, mentally summarize the ideas that are most useful to you. As we suggested earlier, be a selfish listener. Treat a disorganized speech as a river with gold in its sands. Take your mental mining pan, and search for the nuggets of meaning.

Practice Listening Because you spend at least 45 percent of your day listening, you might wonder why we suggest that you practice listening. The reason is that listening skills do not develop automatically. You learn to swim by getting proper instruction; you're unlikely to develop good aquatic skills by just jumping in the water and flailing around. Similarly, you will learn to listen by practicing the methods we recommend.

Researchers believe that poor listeners avoid challenge. For example, they listen to and watch TV situation comedies rather than documentaries or other informative programs. Skill develops as you practice listening to speeches, music, and programs with demanding content.

Understand Your Listening Style New research suggests that not everyone listens to information in the same way. There are at least four different **listening styles**—preferred ways of making sense out of spoken messages. Listening researchers Kitty Watson, Larry Barker, and James Weaver discovered that listeners tend to be either people-oriented, action-oriented, content-oriented, or time-oriented.[15] Understanding your listening style can help you to become a better and more flexible listener.[16]

About 40 percent of listeners have one primary listening style; another 40 percent use more than one style; and about 20 percent don't have a listening style preference. The best listeners are flexible listeners who can adapt their listening style to fit the occasion and the person speaking.[17]

People-Oriented Listeners You're a people-oriented listener if you are comfortable listening to people express feelings and emotions. It's likely that you are highly empathic and that you seek common ground with the person you are listening to. You are easily moved by poignant illustrations and anecdotes.

Action-Oriented Listeners If you like information that is well organized, brief, and accurate but you don't like long stories or digressions from the main ideas, you're likely an action-oriented listener. The action-oriented listener wants people to get to the point and listens for actions that need to be taken. Action-oriented listeners also seem to be more skeptical than are people who use other listening styles. Action-oriented listeners prefer being given evidence to support the recommendations for action.

Content-Oriented Listeners Content-oriented listeners prefer to listen to complex information that is laced with facts and details. You're a content-oriented listener if you reject messages because they don't have adequate support. Content-oriented listeners make good judges or lawyers, because they enjoy listening to debates and hearing arguments for and against ideas.[18]

Time-Oriented Listeners You're a time-oriented listener if you like your messages delivered succinctly. Time is important to you; you want the information you hear to be presented briefly because you are busy. Time-oriented listeners don't like rambling, long-winded messages with lots of filler. Like action-oriented listeners, they want the speaker to get to the point, but they are even more interested in saving time and getting the essential ideas in brief sound bites.

We've emphasized the importance of being an audience-centered speaker, but the opposite is true as well: As a listener, you can improve your concentration if you adjust and adapt your listening style to the speakers you hear. For example, if you are a time-oriented listener and a speaker is spending more time than you would like telling stories and meandering through the material, you'll have to tell yourself to concentrate harder on the message. If you are a people-oriented listener and you're listening to a message that's primarily facts, principles, and ideas, you can be a better listener if you are conscious of why the message might not be holding your attention and work to focus on the message. The key, whether you are speaker or listener, is to ethically adapt and adjust to enhance the quality of communication.

Become an Active Listener

An active listener is one who remains alert and mentally re-sorts, rephrases, and repeats key information when listening to a speech.

Because you can listen to words much faster than a speaker can speak them, it's natural for your mind to wander. But you can use the extra time to focus on interpreting what the speaker says.

HOW TO

Become an Active Listener

If you follow these steps for active listening, you will find yourself feeling stimulated and engaged instead of tired and bored as you listen to even the dullest of speakers:

1. *Re-sort.* If the speaker is rambling, seek ways to rearrange his or her ideas into a new, more logical pattern. For example, re-sort the ideas into a chronological pattern: What happened first, second, and so on? Or even if the speaker hasn't chunked the ideas into a logical framework, see whether you can find a structure to help you reorganize the information.
2. *Rephrase.* Listen for main ideas, and then paraphrase those ideas in your own words. You are more likely to remember your mental paraphrase than the speaker's exact words. If you can, try to mentally summarize what the speaker is saying in a phrase that might fit on a bumper sticker. Listening for "information handles" provided by the speaker in the form of preview, transitions, signposts, and summary statements can also help you to remain actively involved as a listener.
3. *Repeat.* Finally, do more than just rephrase the information as you listen to it. Periodically, *repeat* to yourself key points you want to remember. Go back to essential ideas, and re-state them to yourself every five minutes or so.

Listen Ethically

An effective listener does more than just gain an accurate understanding of a speaker's message; effective listeners are also ethical listeners. An ethical listener participates in a communication by honestly communicating his or her expectations, providing helpful feedback, and being sensitive to and tolerating differences when listening to others. In the fourth century B.C.E., Aristotle warned, "Let men be on their guard against those who flatter and mislead the multitude." And contemporary rhetorician Harold Barrett has said that the audience is the "necessary source of correction" for the behavior of a speaker.[19] The following guidelines for ethical listening incorporate what Barrett calls "attributes of the good audience."

Communicate Your Expectations and Feedback As an audience member, you have the right—even the responsibility—to enter a communication situation with expectations about both the message and how the speaker will deliver it. Know what information and ideas you want to get out of the communication transaction. Expect a coherent, organized, and competently delivered presentation.

Communicate your objectives and react to the speaker's message and delivery through appropriate nonverbal and verbal feedback. For example, maintain eye contact with the speaker. Nod in agreement when you support something the speaker says. There is evidence that by being a supportive listener in these ways, you help the speaker to feel more comfortable and less nervous.[20] We're not suggesting, however, that you fake your support for a speaker. If you show, with an honest, quizzical look, that you do not understand a speaker's point, you can help an attentive, audience-centered speaker to rephrase the message for better listener comprehension. Turn your head to one side and tilt it slightly forward to communicate that you're having trouble hearing. If a question-and-answer period follows the speech, ask any questions that you still have about the speaker's topic or point of view.

Be Sensitive to and Tolerant of Differences As an ethical listener, remember that your preferred approach to speaking and listening may differ from the approach a speaker is using. But your preference doesn't make the speaker's approach a wrong one. For example, suppose you were to attend a high school baccalaureate ceremony at which the speaker was a dynamic African American minister who used a duet-style, call-and-response type of speaking, in which the audience periodically responds verbally to the speaker. If you were to dismiss the minister's delivery as too flamboyant, you might miss out on a powerful message.

Be Aware That Different Cultures Have Different Styles of Speaking Diverse cultural norms can sometimes pose a complex ethical-listening challenge. For example, political and civil-rights leader Jesse Jackson has in the past been accused of making dishonest claims in some of his speeches about his background and behavior. He has said that he left the University of Illinois because of racism on the football team, which caused him to be passed over for starting quarterback—yet former teammates insist that he did not become starting quarterback simply because he was not the strongest player. Jackson has also overstated the poverty he experienced as a child, when in fact he grew up in a fairly comfortable middle-class home. Although many people have criticized such exaggeration, at least one communication researcher has defended Jackson, arguing that although his "tall tales" are not necessarily "the truth" in a strictly objective sense, they are part of a valid African American oral tradition that focuses on the "symbolic import of the story" and in which speakers traditionally exaggerate to enhance the impact of their illustrations.[21] When you consider the cultural expectations and backgrounds of both the speaker and the listeners, you will be in a better position to interpret what is being expressed.

Be attentive and courteous. Consider diverse cultural norms and audience expectations as part of the context within which you listen to and evaluate the speaker. Making an effort to understand the needs, goals, and interests of both the speaker and other audience members can help you to judge how to react appropriately and ethically as a listener.

HOW TO

Enhance Your Listening Skills

	The Good Listener . . .	The Poor Listener . . .
Listen with Your Eyes as Well as Your Ears	• Looks for nonverbal cues to enhance understanding • Adapts to the speaker's delivery	• Focuses only on the words • Is easily distracted by the delivery of the speech
Listen Mindfully	• Is aware of whether or not he or she is listening • Controls emotions • Mentally asks, "What's in it for me?	• Is not aware of whether he or she is on-task or off-task • Erupts emotionally when listening • Does not attempt to relate to the information personally
Listen Skillfully	• Identifies the listening goal • Listens for major ideas • Seeks opportunities to practice listening skills • Understands and adapts his or her listening style to the speaker • Listens actively by resorting, rephrasing, and repeating what is heard	• Does not have a listening goal in mind • Listens for isolated facts • Avoids listening to difficult information • Is not aware of how to capitalize on his or her listening style • Listens passively, making no effort to engage with the information heard
Listen Ethically	• Clearly communicates listening expectations • Is sensitive to and tolerant of differences	• Makes no effort to respond appropriately to a speaker's message • Expects others to have the same beliefs, values, and cultural expectations he or she has

4.d Listening and Critical Thinking

Effective listening requires the ability to listen critically. Listening critically and thinking critically both involve a variety of skills that we reexamine throughout this text. **Critical listening** is the process of listening to evaluate the quality, appropriateness,

value, or importance of the information you hear. Related to being a critical listener is being a critical thinker. **Critical thinking** is a mental process of making judgments about the conclusions that are presented in what you see, hear, and read. The goal of a critical listener or a critical thinker is to evaluate information to make a choice. Whether you are listening to a political candidate giving a persuasive presentation to get your vote, a radio announcer extolling the virtues of a new herbal weight-loss pill, or someone asking you to invest in a new technology company, your goal as a critical listener is to assess the quality of the information and the validity of the conclusions that are presented.

We should emphasize that being a critical listener does not mean that you're looking only for what is wrong in what the speaker says; we're not suggesting that you listen to a speaker only to pounce on the message and the messenger at the conclusion of the speech. Listen to identify what the speaker does that is effective as well as to identify which conclusions don't hold up. Specifically, what does a critical listener do? Consider the following skills.

Separate Facts from Inferences

The ability to separate facts from inferences is one of the most basic critical thinking and listening skills. **Facts** are information that has been proven true by direct observation. For example, it has been directly observed that water boils at 212 degrees Fahrenheit at sea level, that the direction of the magnetic north pole can be found by consulting a compass, and that U.S. presidents have been inaugurated on January 20 every four years for several decades. An **inference** is a conclusion based on partial information or an evaluation that has not been directly observed. You infer that your favorite sports team will win the championship or that it will rain tomorrow. You can also infer that if more Republicans than Democrats are elected to Congress, the next President might be a Republican. But you can know *for a fact* whether the next President is a Republican only after the presidential election. Facts are in the realm of certainty; inferences are in the realm of probability and opinion—where most arguments advanced by public speakers reside. A critical listener knows that when a politician running for office claims, "It's a fact that my opponent is not qualified to be elected," this statement is *not* a fact, but an inference.

Evaluate the Quality of Evidence

Evidence consists of the facts, examples, opinions, and statistics that a speaker uses to support a conclusion. Researchers have documented that the key elements in swaying a jury are the quality and quantity of the evidence that is presented to support a case.[22] Without credible supporting evidence, it would not be wise to agree with a speaker's conclusion.

What should you listen for when trying to decide whether evidence is credible? If, for example, a speaker says, "It's a fact that this herbal weight-loss pill helps people lose weight," your job as a listener is to determine whether that statement is, in fact, a fact. As we've just discussed, a fact is something that has been proven with direct

observation to be true. The speaker has an obligation to provide evidence to support the statement that has been asserted.

Some speakers will support a conclusion with examples. But if the examples aren't typical, if only one or two examples are offered, or if other known examples differ from the one the speaker is using, then you should question the conclusion.

Another form of evidence that a speaker might use to convince you is an opinion. Simply stated, an opinion is a quoted comment from someone. The best opinions come from reliable, credible sources. What makes a source credible? A credible source is someone who has the credentials, experience, and skill to make an observation about the topic at hand. Listen for whom a speaker cites when quoting an expert on a subject.

A fourth kind of evidence that is often used, especially with a skeptical listener, is statistics. A statistic is a number that summarizes a collection of examples. Some of the same kinds of questions that should be raised about other forms of evidence should be raised about statistics: Are the statistics reliable, unbiased, recent, representative, and valid?

Here, we have introduced you to the importance of listening for good evidence. Because evidence is an important element of public speaking, we'll provide more detailed information about how to use evidence when we discuss using supporting material in Chapter 7 and using evidence to persuade, in Chapters 16 and 17.

Evaluate the Underlying Logic and Reasoning

An effective critical listener listens not only for evidence, but also for the overall structure of the logic, or argument, a speaker uses to reach a conclusion. **Logic** is a formal system of rules applied to reach a rational conclusion. A speaker is logical if he or she offers appropriate evidence to reach a valid, well-reasoned conclusion. For example, Angela was trying to convince her listeners to take the weight-loss herb Slimlean by pointing out that many stores sell this diet product, but that is not a strong logical framework for her conclusion. Just because Slimlean is readily available does not mean that it's effective and safe.

Reasoning is the process of drawing a conclusion from evidence within the logical framework of the arguments. Can we reasonably conclude that anyone can lose weight by taking Slimlean simply because the product is available in many stores? The evidence very likely does not support this conclusion. When a speaker is seeking to change your behavior, listen especially carefully to the logic or structure of the arguments that are presented. Is the speaker trying to convince you to do something by offering one or two specific examples? Or is the speaker reaching a conclusion based on a fundamental principle such as "All herbal diet medicine will cause you to lose weight"? The critical listener appropriately reviews the logic and reasoning used to reach a conclusion. When we discuss reasoning fallacies, we will elaborate on different types of reasoning and identify several ways in which speakers misuse logic, reasoning, and evidence.

You might reasonably suspect that a primary goal of a public-speaking class would be to enhance your speaking skill, and you would be right. But in addition to helping you to become a better speaker, a study of communication principles and skills should also help you to become a better consumer of messages. Becoming a critical listener and

thinker is an important benefit that you will enjoy by learning about how messages are constructed. Researchers have found that students who complete any communication course—debate, argumentation, or public speaking—are likely to show improved critical thinking ability. The introduction to critical listening and thinking skills presented here is reinforced throughout the rest of the book by discussions of how to become an audience-centered public speaker.

QUICK CHECK

Critical Thinking and Listening

Separate facts from inferences:

- Facts can be proven.
- Inferences are based on partial or unobserved evidence.

Evaluate evidence:

- Facts
- Examples
- Opinions
- Statistics

Evaluate the logic and reasoning of conclusions.

4.e Analyzing and Evaluating Speeches

Your critical thinking and listening skills will help you to evaluate not only the speeches of others but also your own speeches. When you evaluate something, you judge its value and appropriateness. To make a judgment about the value of something, it's important to use criteria for what is and is not effective or appropriate. **Rhetorical criticism** is the process of using a method or standards to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of messages. *Rhetoric* can be defined as the process of using symbols to create meaning to achieve a goal.[23] As a public speaker, you are a rhetorician in that you are using symbols (words, images, nonverbal cues) to create meaning in the minds of your listeners and achieve a goal (to inform, to persuade, to entertain). To be a rhetorical critic is to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the message and its delivery. Rhetorical critics often point to educator and philosopher John Dewey's description of criticism:

> Criticism . . . is not fault-finding. It is not pointing out evils to be reformed. It is judgment engaged in discriminating among values. It is talking through as to what is better and worse . . . with some consciousness of why the worse is worse.[24]

A critic not only evaluates a message but also helps to illuminate it,[25] by shining a metaphorical light on the message to help others better interpret it.

One important goal of studying public speaking is to help you be a better rhetorical critic of the many messages you hear every day. In our discussion of how to analyze and evaluate speeches, we'll first suggest criteria for evaluating messages and then offer specific strategies for sharing your evaluations with others.

Understanding Criteria for Evaluating Speeches

What makes a speech good? For more than 2,000 years, rhetorical scholars have been debating this question. Our purpose here is not to take you through the centuries of dialogue and debate about this issue but to offer some practical ways to help you evaluate your own messages as well as the messages of others.

Your public-speaking teacher will probably have you use an evaluation form that lists the precise criteria for evaluating your speeches. Figure 4.2 lists key questions to use in evaluating any speech. The questions reflect the audience-centered model of public speaking.

Underlying any list of what a good speaker should do are two fundamental goals: (1) A speech should be effective, and (2) a speech should be ethical. The mission of the National Communication Association mirrors these two goals—to promote effective and ethical communication. These two requirements can translate into general criteria for evaluating speeches you give as well as those you hear.

The Message Should Be Effective

To be effective, the message of a speech should be understandable to listeners and should achieve its intended purpose.[26]

Is the Message Understood? If listeners fail to comprehend the speaker's ideas, the speech fails. Even more difficult than saying something is saying something that a listener understands. In this course, you'll learn an array of principles and strategies to help you develop a common understanding with your audience. The process of communicating to be understood is anchored first and foremost in considering the needs of your listeners. As you listen to speeches, a fundamental criterion for determining whether the message is a good one is whether you understand the message.

Does the Message Achieve Its Goal? When you communicate with an audience, you want to achieve a goal or accomplish something. Typical general goals of public speaking are to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. The challenge in using this criterion in evaluating speeches is that you might not always know the speaker's true intent. Often, the best you can do is try to determine the purpose by being a careful listener.

The Message Should Be Ethical

A good speaker is an ethical speaker. Ethics are the beliefs, values, and moral principles by which people determine what is right or wrong. An ethical public speaker tells the truth, gives credit for ideas and words where credit is due, and doesn't plagiarize. A speaker's message may be clearly understood by the audience and also get the reaction the speaker desired. However, if the speaker uses unethical means to achieve the goal, it may be an *effective* message but it is not an *appropriate* message.

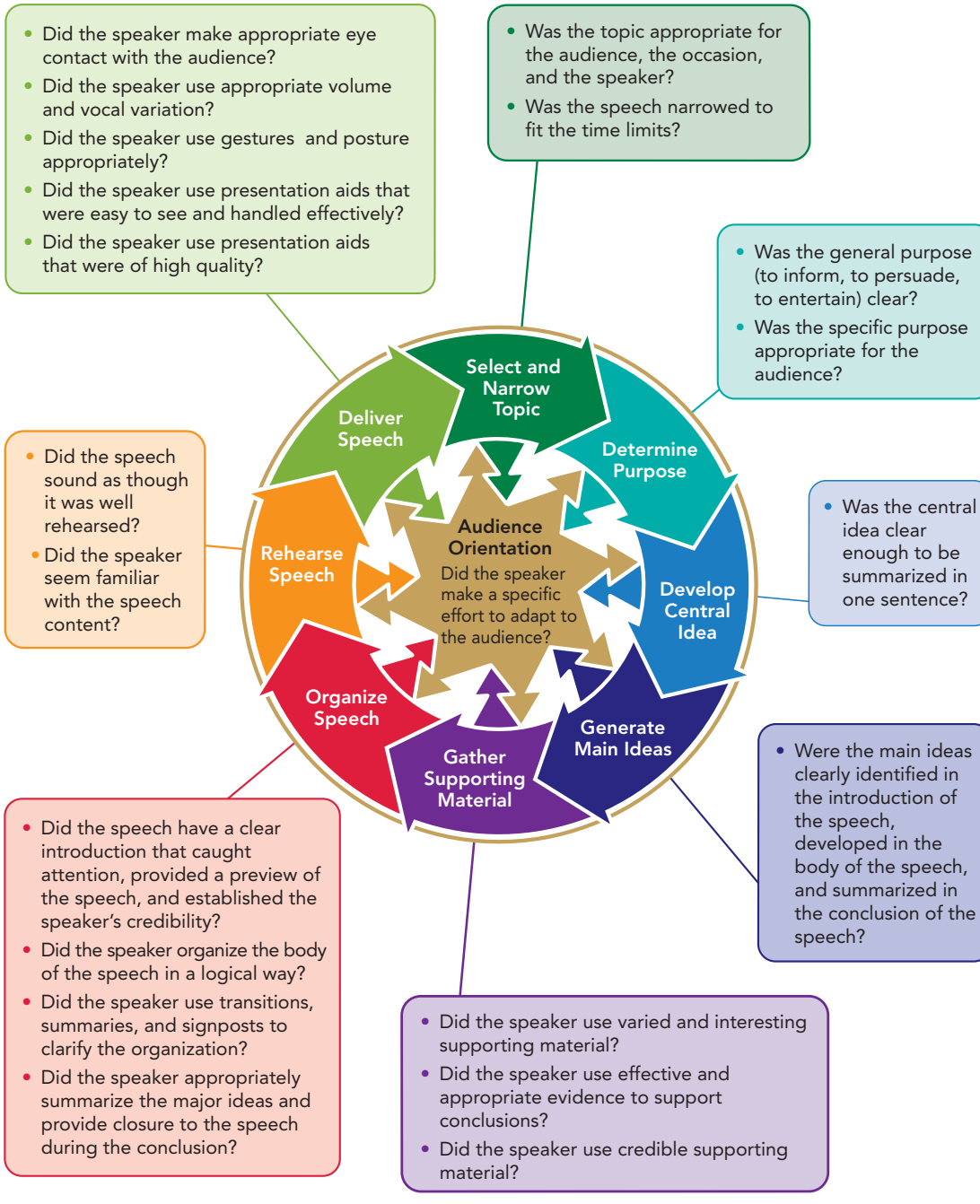


FIGURE 4.2 *Asking yourself these questions will help you to evaluate any speech.*

You will probably speak to audiences that have a wide array of cultural backgrounds. Regardless of their cultural tradition, each of your listeners holds an underlying ethical code. Although, as we noted in Chapter 3, not all cultures have the same ethical rules, many cultures adhere to precepts that, in essence, state the value of being audience-centered by considering how other people would like to be treated. An ethical public speaker focuses not only on achieving the goal of the message but also on doing so while being sensitive and responsive to listeners.

Identifying and Analyzing Rhetorical Strategies

As we have said, *rhetoric* is the use of symbols to achieve goals. **Symbols** are words, images (a flag, a cross, a six-pointed star), and behaviors that create meaning for others. Whether you use them in an interview to convince an employer to hire you for a job or hear them in a TV commercial that is designed to persuade you to vote for a presidential candidate, words and images that symbolically inform and persuade are all around you. Public speakers, too, are rhetoricians who use symbols to achieve their goals.

Studying public speaking not only can make you a better speaker, but also can help you be a better consumer of the speeches you hear. One way to enhance your listening skills and become more mindfully aware of how messages influence your behavior is to analyze the rhetorical strategies a speaker is using. **Rhetorical strategies** are methods and techniques that speakers employ to achieve their speaking goals. It's especially important to be aware of how some speakers may use rhetorical techniques to deceive or manipulate. Speakers sometimes use unethical strategies to achieve their goals, such as misusing evidence, relying too heavily on emotion to persuade, or fabricating information.

Rhetorician Robert Rowland suggests that, to analyze rhetorical messages, listeners must be conscious of (1) the goal of the message, (2) its organization, (3) the speaker's role, (4) the overall tone of the message, (5) the intended audience, and (6) the techniques the speaker uses to achieve the goal.[27] By considering the questions in Table 4.1, you can begin to understand how any speaker is using rhetorical strategies to achieve his or her goal. Using these questions will help you to figure out what any speaker is really saying and better understand the techniques he or she is using. The more clearly you can identify and analyze the speaker's methods, the more effectively you can assess whether the message and the messenger are worthy of your support.

Giving Feedback to Others

As you enhance your skills of listening to messages and identifying the rhetorical strategies a speaker uses, you may be asked to evaluate the speeches of other people and provide feedback to the speakers. You can use the speech evaluation criteria in Figure 4.2 and the framework of questions to use in analyzing rhetorical strategies in Table 4.1 to help you evaluate others' messages. Your instructor may provide you with a speech evaluation form that will also help you to focus on and evaluate essential elements of public speechmaking.

TABLE 4.1 *Evaluating a Speaker's Rhetorical Strategies*

Speech Goal
- What is the overall goal of the message?
- What are the main points or themes of the message?
- What is the speaker asking the audience to do?

Speech Organization
- What is the overall organizational structure of the message?
- How does the introduction set the tone for the message?
- How does the conclusion summarize the message and point listeners to what the speaker wants to happen next?
- How does the body of the speech support the primary objective of the speech?

Speaker Role
- What is the role of the speaker?
- Is the speaker assuming either an explicit or an implied role, such as authority figure or expert on the topic addressed?
- What kind of relationship has the speaker established with the audience?

Speaker Tone
- What is the overall tone, or "feel," of the message?
- How does the speaker use language to establish a tone?
- How does the speaker use stories and other illustrations to establish a tone?
- How does the speaker deliver the message to establish a tone?

Audience
- Who is the intended audience of the message?
- Who is present to hear the message?
- Is the message aimed at others who are not present?

Speaker Techniques
- What strategies or techniques does the speaker use to achieve the speech goals?
- Does the speaker use rational, logical arguments? Stories? Artistic language?
- Does the speaker appeal to the needs and values of the listeners?
- Does the speaker develop high credibility?
- Does the speaker attempt to move listeners by confronting them?

When you're invited to critique your classmates' speeches, your feedback will be more effective if you keep some general principles in mind. The word *criticism* comes from a Greek word meaning "to judge or discuss." Therefore, as was noted earlier, to criticize a speech is to discuss the speech—identifying both its strengths and those aspects that could be improved. Effective criticism stems from developing a genuine interest in the speaker rather than from seeking to find fault.

When given the opportunity to critique your classmates' speeches, make your evaluation more meaningful and helpful to them by supplementing the evaluations that you provide on your evaluation form with the following kinds of feedback:

1. *Be descriptive.* In a neutral way, describe what you saw the speaker doing. Act as a mirror for the speaker to help him or her become aware of gestures and other nonverbal

signals of which he or she might not be aware. (If you are watching a video recording of the speech together, you can help to point out behaviors.) Avoid providing a list of only your likes and dislikes; describe what you observe.

Effective: Stan, I noticed that about 50 percent of the time, you had direct eye contact with your listeners.

Less Effective: Your eye contact was lousy.

2. *Be specific.* When you describe what you see a speaker doing, make sure your descriptions are precise enough to give the speaker a clear image of your perceptions. Saying that a speaker had "poor delivery" doesn't give him or her much information—it's only a general evaluative comment. Be as specific and thoughtful as you can.

Effective: Dawn, your use of color on your overhead transparency helped to keep my attention.

Less Effective: I liked your visuals.

3. *Be positive.* Begin and end your feedback with positive comments. Beginning with negative comments immediately puts the speaker on the defensive and can create so much internal noise that he or she stops listening. Starting and ending with positive comments will engender less defensiveness. Some teachers call this approach the "feedback sandwich." First, tell the speaker something that you thought he or she did well. This will let the speaker know that you're not an enemy who's trying to shoot holes in his or her performance. Then share a suggestion or two that could help the speaker to improve the presentation. End your evaluation with another positive comment, or restate what you liked best about the presentation.

Effective: Gabe, I thought your opening statistic was very effective in catching my attention. You also maintained direct eye contact when you delivered it. Your overall organizational pattern would have been clearer to me if you had used more signposts and transition statements. Or perhaps you could use a visual aid to summarize the main points. You did a good job of summarizing your three points in your conclusion. I also liked the way you ended your speech by making a reference to your opening statistics.

Less Effective: I got lost when you were in the body of your speech. I couldn't figure out what your major ideas were. I also didn't know when you made the transition between the introduction and the body of your speech. Your intro and conclusion were good, but the organization of the speech was weak.

4. *Be constructive.* Give the speaker some suggestions or alternatives for improvement. It's not especially helpful to rattle off a list of things you don't like without providing some suggestions for improvement. As a student of public speaking, your comments should reflect your growing skill and sophistication in the speechmaking process.

Effective: Jerry, I thought your speech had several good statistics and examples that suggest you spent a lot of time in the library researching your topic. I think you could add credibility to your message if you shared your sources with the listener. Your vocal quality was effective, and you had considerable variation in your pitch and tone,

but at times the speech rate was a little fast for me. A slower rate would have helped me catch some of the details of your message.

Less Effective: You spoke too fast. I had no idea whom you were quoting.

5. *Be sensitive.* "Own" your feedback by using I-statements rather than you-statements. An *I-statement* is a way of phrasing your feedback so that it is clear that your comments reflect your personal point of view. "I found my attention drifting during the body of your speech" is an example of an I-statement. A *you-statement* is a less sensitive way of describing someone's behavior by implying that the other person did something wrong. "You didn't summarize very well in your conclusion" is an example of a you-statement. A better way to make the same point is to say, "I wasn't sure I understood the key ideas you mentioned in your conclusion." Here's another example:

Effective: Mark, I found myself so distracted by your gestures that I had trouble focusing on the message.

Less Effective: Your gestures were distracting and awkward.

6. *Be realistic.* Provide usable information. Provide feedback about aspects of the presentation that the speaker can improve rather than about things he or she cannot control. Maybe you have heard this advice: "Never try to teach a pig to sing. It wastes your time. It doesn't sound pretty. And it annoys the pig." Saying, "You're too short to be seen over the lectern," "Your lisp doesn't lend itself to public speaking," or "You looked nervous" is not constructive. Comments like these will just annoy or frustrate the speaker because they refer to things the speaker can't do much to change. Concentrate on behaviors over which the speaker has control.

Effective: Taka, I thought your closing quote was effective in summarizing your key ideas, but it didn't end your speech on an uplifting note. I can suggest another quote from Khalil Gibran that would also summarize your key points and provide a positive affirmation of your message. You may want to try it if you give this speech again.

Less Effective: Your voice isn't well suited to public speaking.

As you provide feedback, whether in your public-speaking class or to a friend who asks you for a reaction to his or her speech, remember that the goal of feedback is to offer descriptive and specific information that helps a speaker to build confidence and skill.

QUICK CHECK

Giving Good Feedback

Help your fellow speakers by making sure your evaluations are:

- Descriptive
- Specific
- Positive
- Constructive
- Sensitive
- Realistic

Giving Feedback to Yourself

While you are collecting feedback from your instructor, classmates, family, and friends, keep in mind that *you* are the most important critic of your speeches. The ultimate goal of public-speaking instruction is to learn principles and skills that enable you to be your own best critic. As you rehearse your speech, use self-talk to comment about the choices you make as a speaker. Learn to recognize when to make changes on your feet, in the middle of a speech. For example, if you notice that your audience isn't interested in the facts and statistics you are sharing, you might decide to support your points with a couple of stories instead. After your speech, take time to reflect on both the speech's virtues and the areas for improvement in your speechmaking. We encourage you to consider the following principles to enhance your own self-critiquing skills.

Look For and Reinforce Your Skills and Speaking Abilities Try to recognize your strengths and skills as a public speaker. Note how your audience analysis, organization, and delivery were effective in achieving your objectives. Such positive reflection can reinforce the many skills you are learning in this course. Resist the temptation to be too harsh or critical of your speaking skill.

Evaluate Your Effectiveness on the Basis of Your Specific Speaking Situation and Audience Throughout the book, we offer many suggestions and tips for improving your speaking skill. We also stress, however, that these prescriptions should be considered in light of your specific audience. Don't be a slave to rules. If you are giving a pep talk to the Little League team you are coaching, you might not have to construct an attention-getting opening statement. Be flexible. Public speaking is an art as well as a science. Give yourself permission to adapt principles and practices to specific speech situations.

Identify One or Two Areas for Improvement After each speaking opportunity, identify what you did right, then give yourself a suggestion or two for ways to improve. You may be tempted to overwhelm yourself with a long list of things you need to do as a speaker. Rather than trying to work on a dozen goals, concentrate on two or three or maybe even just one key skill you would like to develop. To help you make your decision, keep in mind the audience-centered model of public speaking.

Ultimately, the goal of this course is to teach you how to listen to your own commentary and become your own expert in shaping and polishing your speaking style.

STUDY GUIDE

Remember These Main Ideas

- Listening is a process that involves selecting, attending to, understanding, remembering, and responding to messages.
- Some of the barriers that keep people from listening at peak efficiency include information overload, personal concerns, outside distractions, prejudice, differing speech and thought rates, and receiver apprehension.
- To overcome these barriers and improve your listening skills, listen with your eyes as well as your ears, listen mindfully, listen skillfully, and listen ethically.
- Listening with your eyes means that you accurately interpret nonverbal messages.
- Mindful listeners are aware of whether they are on-task or off-task. They keep their emotions under control and avoid jumping to conclusions.
- Effective listeners are selfish listeners. They find ways to benefit from the information they are listening to and to connect it with their own experiences and needs.
- Skillful listeners know their listening goals and adjust their efforts accordingly. They practice listening to challenging material. They also know their own preferred listening styles and use information to help them adapt to a variety of speakers.
- To be a skillful listener, you should listen for major ideas and try to relate specific facts to those ideas.
- Listen actively by re-sorting, rephrasing and repeating what you hear.
- Ethical listeners communicate their expectations and feedback to speakers and remain sensitive to, as well as tolerant of, differences. For example, they focus on a speaker's message rather than on his or her delivery style.
- Effective listening requires the ability to listen critically. The ability to separate facts from inferences is one of the most basic critical thinking and listening skills.
- An effective critical listener listens not only for evidence, but also for the overall structure and quality of the logic or argument the speaker uses to reach a conclusion.
- In a good speech, the message should be effective and achieve its intended purpose, and the message should be ethical.
- Be aware of how some speakers may use rhetorical techniques to deceive or manipulate you.
- When giving feedback to others, identify both strengths of a speech and aspects that could be improved; be descriptive, specific, positive, constructive, sensitive, and realistic.
- When giving feedback to yourself, look for and reinforce your skills and speaking abilities, evaluate your effectiveness on the basis of your specific speaking situation and audience, and identify one or two areas for improvement.

Understand These Key Terms

attend (p. 53)
critical listening (p. 67)
critical thinking (p. 68)
evidence (p. 68)
facts (p. 68)
inference (p. 68)
listening (p. 52)
listening styles (p. 63)
logic (p. 69)
reasoning (p. 69)
receiver apprehension (p. 58)
remember (p. 53)
respond (p. 53)
rhetorical criticism (p. 70)
rhetorical strategies (p. 73)
select (p. 53)
symbols (p. 73)
understanding (p. 53)
working memory theory of listening (p. 54)

Think about These Questions

- For some reason, when Alberto hears the President speak, he just tunes out. What are some of the barriers that may be keeping Alberto from focusing on the message he is hearing? How might Alberto overcome those barriers?
- One of your instructors does nothing during lectures but read in a monotone from old notes. What strategies can you use to increase your listening effectiveness in this challenging situation?
- As an ethical listener, what can you do to be less distracted by the delivery and emotional elements of a speaker's message and more focused on the substance or content of the message? Explain your answer.
- Janice was assigned the task of critiquing one of her classmate's speeches. Although she thought the speech was pretty good, she gave the speaker low marks because she strongly disagreed with what the speaker was saying. Was this an appropriate evaluation? Why or why not?

Learn More Online

International Listening Association This organization is dedicated solely to the study of listening.
www.listen.org

American Rhetoric Practice the listening skills that you learned in this chapter of your textbook by listening to classic and notable contemporary speeches at the American Rhetoric site.
www.americanrhetoric.com

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Analyzing Your Audience 5

"For of the three elements in speech-making—speaker, subject, and person addressed—it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speech's end and object."

—Aristotle

OUTLINE

5.a Becoming an Audience-Centered Speaker

5.b Gathering Information about Your Audience
- Gathering Information Informally
- Gathering Information Formally

5.c Analyzing Information about Your Audience
- Look for Audience Member Similarities
- Look for Audience Member Differences
- Establish Common Ground with Your Audience

5.d Adapting to Your Audience

5.e Analyzing Your Audience Before You Speak
- Demographic Audience Analysis
- Psychographic Audience Analysis
- Situational Audience Analysis

5.f Adapting to You Audience as You Speak
- Identifying Nonverbal Audience Cues
- Responding to Nonverbal Cues
- Strategies for Customizing Your Message to Your Audience

5.g Analyzing Your Audience After You Speak
- Nonverbal Responses
- Verbal Responses
- Survey Responses
- Behavioral Responses

It seemed harmless enough. Charles Williams was asked to speak to a Cub Scout pack about his experience as a young cowboy in Texas. The boys were learning to tie knots, and Williams, a retired rancher, could tell them how to make a lariat and how to make and use other knots.

His speech started out well. He seemed to be adapting to his young audience. However, for some reason, Williams thought the boys might also enjoy learning how to exterminate the screwworm, a pesky parasite of cattle. In the middle of his talk about roping cattle, he launched into a presentation about the techniques for sterilizing male screwworms. The parents in the audience fidgeted in their seats. The seven- and eight-year-olds didn't have the foggiest idea what a screwworm was, what sterilization was, or how male and female screwworms mate.

It got worse; his audience analysis skills deteriorated even more. Williams next talked about castrating cattle. Twenty-five minutes later, he finally finished the screwworm/castration speech. The parents were relieved. Fortunately, the boys hadn't understood it.

Williams's downfall resulted from his failure to analyze his audience. He may have had a clear objective in mind, but he hadn't considered the background or knowledge of his listeners. Audience analysis is essential for any successful speech.

5.a Becoming an Audience-Centered Speaker

In Chapter 1, we identified the key elements in communication: source, receiver, message, and channel. All four elements are important, but perhaps the most important is the receiver. In public speaking, the receiver is the audience, and the audience is the reason for a speech event. We also presented a model that provides an overview of the entire process of speech preparation and delivery; the model is shown again in Figure 5.1. We stressed in Chapter 1 and reemphasize here the concept of public speaking as an audience-centered activity. At each stage in crafting your speech, you must be mindful of your audience.

The How To box summarizes three key steps in becoming an audience-centered public speaker. In this chapter, we'll talk more about those three steps in more detail and discuss the process of analyzing your audience before, during, and after you speak. The audience-analysis skills and techniques that we present in this chapter will help you throughout the public-speaking process. Consciousness of your audience will be important as you select a topic, determine the purpose of your speech, develop your central idea, generate main ideas, gather supporting material, firm up your organization, rehearse, and deliver your speech.

When you think of your audience, don't think of some undifferentiated mass of people waiting to hear your message. Instead, think of individuals. Public speaking is the process of speaking to a group of individuals, each with a unique point of view. Your challenge as an audience-centered public speaker is to find out as much as you can

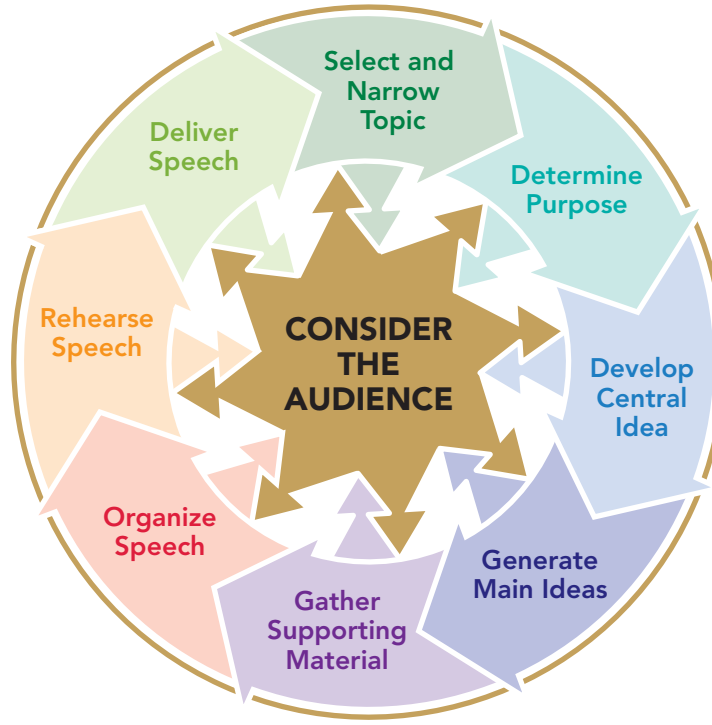

FIGURE 5.1 *Audience analysis is central to the speechmaking process.*

HOW TO

Become an Audience-Centered Speaker

1. *Gather information about your audience.* You can gather some information informally, just by observing your listeners or asking general questions about them. Or you can take a more formal approach and administer a survey to obtain more specific information about them.
2. *Analyze the information you have gathered.* Categorize and evaluate what you have gathered to determine your listeners' psychological profile as well as to consider the occasion at which you are speaking.
3. *Use your information to ethically adapt to your listeners.* As our audience-centered model illustrates, each decision that you make when designing and delivering your message should consider the needs and backgrounds of your audience.

about these individuals. From your knowledge of the individuals, you can then develop a general profile of your listeners.

5.b Gathering Information about Your Audience

As an audience-centered speaker, you should try to find out as much as you can about your audience before planning your speech. You might wonder, "How do I go about gathering information about my audience?" There are two approaches you can take: an informal one and a formal one.

Gathering Information Informally

The simplest way to gather information about your audience members informally is just to observe them and ask questions before you speak. Informal observations can be especially important in helping you to assess obvious demographic characteristics. **Demographics** are statistical information about characteristics such as age, race, gender, sexual orientation, educational level, and ideological or religious views of a population such as an audience. For example, you can observe how many members of your audience are male or female, and you can make some inferences from their appearance about their ethnic or cultural traits and approximate age.

If you were going to address a meeting of your local PTA about a new business you were opening to help students and parents develop science projects, you could attend a meeting before your speaking date. You might note the general percentage of men and women in the audience and the ages of the parents who attended. You could also ask whether most parents who show up for PTA meetings are parents of elementary, middle-school, or high-school students. Knowing these key pieces of information would help you to tailor your speech so that it will address your listeners' interests.

You could also talk with people who know something about the audience you will be addressing. If you are invited to speak to a group you have not spoken to before, ask the person who invited you some general questions about the audience members: What is their average age? What are their political affiliations? What are their religious beliefs? What are their attitudes toward your topic? Try to get as much information as possible about your audience before you give your speech.

Gathering Information Formally

Rather than relying only on inferences drawn from casual observation and conversations with others, you may, if time and resources permit, want to conduct a more formal survey of your listeners. You can use surveys to gather demographic information that

Demographic Audience-Analysis Questionnaire

1. Name (optional): _____
2. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐
3. Occupation: _____
4. Religious affiliation: _____
5. Marital status: Married ☐ Single ☐ Divorced ☐
6. Years of schooling beyond high school: _____
7. Major in college: _____
8. Annual income: _____
9. Age: _____
10. Ethnic background: _____
11. Hometown and state: _____
12. Political affiliation: Republican ☐ Democrat ☐ Other ☐ None ☐
13. Membership in professional or fraternal organizations: _____

FIGURE 5.2 *Demographic Audience-Analysis Questionnaire. You can modify this sample questionnaire according to your audience and topic.*

is not immediately available through observation, such as the questionnaire shown in Figure 5.2.

Although knowing your audience's demographics can be helpful, remember that inferences based on generalized information can lead to faulty conclusions. For example, it might seem reasonable to infer that if your audience consists mainly of 18- to 22-year-olds, they will not be deeply interested in retirement programs. But unless you have talked to them specifically about these topics, your inference could be incorrect.

You can also use your survey to get information about audience members' attitudes. Figure 5.3 shows survey questions that might be used to determine audience attitudes about in-school health clinics that dispense birth-control pills to high-school students. Whenever possible, ask listeners specific questions about what they like or dislike, believe to be true or false, or think is good or bad about the topic or issues you are discussing

If your topic is the best approach to finding a rental apartment in your area, for example, find out how many members of your audience own a home and how many are currently living in an apartment. You might also want to ask how they found their current apartment, how many are now searching for an apartment, and how many anticipate searching for one. Answers to these questions can give

Open-Ended Questions

1. What are your feelings about having high-school health clinics dispense birth-control pills?
2. What are your reactions to the current rate of teenage pregnancy?
3. What would you do if you discovered your daughter was receiving birth-control pills from her high-school health clinic?

Closed-Ended Questions

1. Are you in favor of school-based health clinics dispensing birth-control pills to high-school students?
   Yes ☐ No ☐
2. Birth-control pills should be given to high-school students who ask for them in school-based health clinics. (Circle the statement that best describes your feeling.)
   Agree strongly Agree Undecided Disagree Disagree strongly
3. Check the statement that most closely reflects your feelings about school-based health clinics and birth-control pills.
   - ☐ Students should receive birth-control pills in school-based health clinics whenever they want them, without their parents' knowledge.
   - ☐ Students should receive birth-control pills in school-based health clinics whenever they want them, as long as they have their parents' permission.
   - ☐ I am not certain whether students should receive birth-control pills in school-based health clinics.
   - ☐ Students should not receive birth-control pills in school-based health clinics.
4. Rank the following statements from most desirable (1) to least desirable (5).
   - ____ Birth-control pills should be available to all high-school students in school-based health clinics, whenever students want them, and even if their parents are not aware that their daughters are taking the pills.
   - ____ Birth-control pills should be available to all high-school students in school-based health clinics, but only if their parents have given their permission.
   - ____ Birth-control pills should be available to high-school students without their parents' knowledge, but not in school-based health clinics.
   - ____ Birth-control pills should be available to high-school students, but not in school-based health clinics, and only with their parents' permission.
   - ____ Birth-control pills should not be available to high-school students.

FIGURE 5.3 *Sample Audience Attitude Survey*

you useful information about your audience and may also provide examples to use in your presentation. Whatever information you want to gather, you will need to develop a well-written survey or questionnaire. We offer some survey writing tips in the How To box.

HOW TO

Develop a Survey

1. *Decide what you want to know about your audience.* Let your topic and the speaking occasion help you to determine the kinds of questions you should pose.
2. *Write your questions.* You can ask your potential audience straightforward questions about such demographic information as age, sex, occupation, and memberships in professional organizations. To determine their attitudes, you can use the two types of questions shown in Figure 5.3:
   - **Open-ended questions** allow for unrestricted answers without limiting answers to choices or alternatives. Use open-ended questions when you want more detailed information from your audience.
   - **Closed-ended questions** offer several alternatives from which to choose. They are very useful when you want to tabulate statistics about your audience.
3. *Test your survey.* After you develop the questions, it is wise to test them on a small group of people to make sure the questions are clear and will encourage meaningful answers.
4. *Administer your survey.* After you have made any needed changes to clarify your questions, you are ready to ask audience members to respond to the survey. Instead of, or in addition to, distributing a paper-and-pencil survey, you could use e-mail, send text messages, or invite audience members to click on a Web site or Facebook page that you've designed. Just be sure to allow plenty of time to analyze the responses before your speech.

5.c Analyzing Information about Your Audience

Audience analysis is the process of examining information about the listeners who will hear your speech. That analysis helps you to adapt your message so that your listeners will respond as you wish. You analyze audiences every day as you speak to others or join in group conversations. For example, most of us do not deliberately make offensive comments to family members or friends. Rather, we analyze our audience (often very quickly), and then we adapt our messages to the individuals with whom we are speaking. Public speaking involves the same sort of process.

Precisely what do you look for when analyzing the information that you have gathered about your audience? Consider answering the following questions:

- How are audience members similar to one another?
- How are audience members different from one another?
- On the basis of their similarities and differences, how can I establish common ground with the audience?

Look for Audience Member Similarities

Knowing what several members of your audience have in common can help you to craft a message that resonates with them. For example, if your audience members are approximately the same age, then you have some basis for selecting examples and illustrations that your listeners will understand. When looking for similarities, consider the following questions: What ethnic and cultural characteristics do audience members have in common? Are they all from the same geographic region? Do they (or did they) attend the same college or university? Do they have similar levels of education? Do they all like the same kinds of things? Answering these and other questions will help you to develop your own ideas and relate your message to your listeners.

Look for Audience Member Differences

Besides noting similarities, you can also note differences among your audience members. It is unlikely that all the audience members for the speeches you give in class will have similar backgrounds. The range of cultural backgrounds, ethnic ties, and religious traditions among students at most colleges and universities is rapidly expanding. You can also note a range of differences in age and gender as well as perspectives about your topic.

Establish Common Ground with Your Audience

When you know what your audience members have in common as well as how they differ, both in terms of demographic information (such as age or education level) and in terms of attitudes and beliefs they may have about you or your topic, then you can seek to establish common ground with your audience. To establish **common ground** with your audience is to identify ways in which you and your listeners are alike. The more your listeners identify with you and the goals of your message, the more likely they are to respond positively. When you analyze your audience, keep in mind that although each audience member is unique, with his or her own characteristics and preferences, you are looking for general ways in which they are alike or different. Sometimes the only common ground you may find is that both you and your listeners believe that the issue you are addressing is a serious one; you might have different views about the best solution. If, for example, you were addressing a group of people who were mostly against increasing taxes to pay teachers higher salaries but you were in favor of a tax increase, you could establish common ground by noting that both you and your listeners value education and want high-quality teachers in the classroom.

When you meet someone for the first time, you may spend time identifying people that you both know or places you've both visited. In this way, you begin to establish a relationship with this person. A **relationship** is an ongoing connection you have with another person. A public speaker seeks to establish a relationship with his or her audience by identifying what the speaker has in common with the listeners. Use the information from your audience analysis to establish a relationship with your listeners—that is, build bridges between you and your audience.

QUICK CHECK

Analyzing Audience Information

Look for:

- Similarities among listeners
- Differences among listeners
- Common ground with listeners

5.d Adapting to Your Audience

Audience adaptation is the process of ethically using information you've gathered when analyzing your audience to help your audience clearly understand your message and to help you achieve your speaking objective. To adapt is to modify your message to enhance its clarity and to enhance the likelihood that you will ethically achieve your goal.

If you only analyze your audience but don't use the information to customize your message, the information that you've gathered will be of little value. Using your skill to learn about your listeners and then to adapt to them can help you to maintain your listeners' attention and make them more receptive to your ideas.

Here's an example of how analyzing and adapting to others works: Mike spent a glorious spring break at Daytona Beach. He and three friends piled into a car and headed for a week of adventure. When he returned from the beach, sunburned and fatigued from partying, people asked how his holiday went. He described his escapades to his best friend, his mother, and his communication professor.

To his best friend, he bragged, "We partied all night and slept on the beach all day. It was great!" He informed his mother, "It was good to relax after the hectic pace of college." And he told his professor, "It was mentally invigorating to have time to think things out." It was the same vacation—but how different the messages were! Mike adapted his message to the people he addressed; he had analyzed his audiences.

When you are speaking in public, you should use the same process Mike used in reporting on his spring break. The principle is simple yet powerful: An effective public speaker is audience-centered. Several key questions can help you to formulate an effective approach to your audience:

Consider Your Audience

- To whom am I speaking?
- What does my audience expect from me?
- What topic would be most suitable for my audience?

Consider Your Speech Goal

- What is my objective?

Consider Your Speech Content

- What kind of information should I share with my audience?
- How should I present the information to them?
- How can I gain and hold their attention?
- What kind of examples would work best?

Consider Your Delivery

- What language or linguistic differences do audience members have?
- What method of organizing information will be most effective?

Being audience-centered does not mean that you should tell your listeners only what they want to hear or that you should fabricate information simply to please your audience or achieve your goal. If you adapt to your audience by abandoning your own values and sense of truth, then you will become an unethical speaker rather than an audience-centered one. It was President Truman who pondered, "I wonder how far Moses would have gone if he'd taken a poll in Egypt?"[1] The audience-centered speaker adjusts his or her topic, purpose, central idea, main ideas, supporting materials, organization, and even delivery of the speech so as to encourage the audience to listen to his or her ideas. The goal is to make the audience come away from the speaking situation if not persuaded, then at least feeling thoughtful rather than offended or hostile.

In this overview of how to become an audience-centered speaker, we've pointed out the importance of gathering information, analyzing it to establish common ground, and then using the information to ethically adapt to your listeners. Now we'll discuss these ideas in more detail. You will want to gather and analyze information and use it to adapt to your listeners at three stages of the speechmaking process: before you speak, as you speak, and after you speak.

QUICK CHECK

Adapting to Your Audience

To use information ethically to help an audience understand your message, consider your:

- Listeners
- Speech goal
- Speech content
- Delivery

Avoid pandering to listeners or making up information.

5.e Analyzing Your Audience Before You Speak

Learning about your audience members' backgrounds and attitudes can help you to select a topic, define a purpose, develop an outline, and carry out virtually all other speech-related activities. You can gather and analyze three primary types of information:

1. Demographic
2. Psychological
3. Situational

Demographic Audience Analysis

As we noted earlier, *demographics* are statistics on population characteristics such as age; gender; sexual orientation; culture, ethnicity, and race; group membership; and socioeconomic status. Now let's consider how **demographic audience analysis** can help you to better understand and adapt to your audience.

Age Although you must use caution in generalizing from only one factor such as age, that information can suggest the kinds of examples, humor, illustrations, and other types of supporting material to use in your speech. For example, many students in your public-speaking class are probably in their late teens or early twenties. Some, however, may be older. The younger students may know the latest rap performers or musicians, for example, but the older ones might not be familiar with Wyclef Jean, Lil Wayne, or Monica. If you are going to give a talk on rap music, you will have to explain who the performers are and describe or demonstrate their style if you want all the members of your class to understand what you are talking about.

For centuries, adults have lamented that younger generations don't seem to share the values of the older generation. Two current researchers who have studied generational differences have found that different generations do, indeed, have distinctive values and hold differing assumptions about work, duty, and certain values. Table 5.1 summarizes the values and generational characteristics of four generations: matures, baby boomers, generation X, and millennials.[2]

What do these generational differences have to do with public speaking? Over 2,000 years ago, Aristotle noted that a good speaker knows how to adapt to audiences of different age levels. Your **credibility** as a speaker—how positively you are perceived by your audience—depends on your sensitivity to the values and assumptions of your listeners. Of course, the broad generalizations that we've summarized here don't apply across the board, but it's wise to consider how generational differences can affect how your message is interpreted.

TABLE 5.1 *Summary of Generational Characteristics*

Generation Name	Birth Years	Typical Values and Characteristics
Matures	1925–1942	• Hard work • Duty • Sacrifice • A sense of what is right • Work fast
Baby Boomers	1943–1960	• Personal fulfillment and optimism • Crusading causes • Buy now, pay later • Equal rights for all • Work efficiently
Generation X	1961–1981	• Live with uncertainty • Balance is important • Live for today • Save • Every job is a contract
Millennials	1982–2002	• Close to parents • Feel "special" • Goal-oriented • Team-oriented • Focus on achievement

Gender Josh began his speech by thanking his predominantly female audience for taking time from their busy schedules to attend his presentation on managing personal finances—not a bad way to begin a talk. However, he continued by noting that their job responsibilities of raising children, keeping their homes clean, and feeding their families were among the most important tasks in America. Josh thought he was paying his audience a compliment. He did not consider that today most women work outside the home as well as in it. Many of his listeners were insulted—and many of them stopped being listeners. The How To box offers some tips so that you don't suffer a similar experience.

HOW TO

Adapt Your Message to the Genders of Your Audience

- *Avoid Making Assumptions About Gender.* Unlike a person's sex, which is determined by biology as either male or female, **gender** is the culturally constructed and psychologically based perception of one's self as feminine or masculine. We develop our gender identities as a result of life experiences, including social learning from others, and our inherited personality and genetics. Any

person's gender-role identity can fall anywhere on the continuum from masculine to feminine. Try to ensure that your remarks reflect sensitivity to diversity in your listeners' points of view.

- *Avoid Sexist Language.* Take time to educate yourself about what words, phrases, or perspectives are likely to offend or create psychological noise for your listeners. Think carefully about the implications of words or phrases you take for granted. For example, many people still use the words *ladies* or *matrons* without thinking about their connotations in U.S. culture. Be especially wary about jokes. Many are derogatory to one sex or the other. Avoid stereotypes in your stories and examples as well.
- *Be Inclusive.* Make your language and your message as inclusive as possible. If you are speaking to a mixed audience, make sure that your speech relates to all your listeners, not just to one gender. If you decided to discuss breast cancer, for example, you could note that men, too, can be victims of breast cancer and that the lives of husbands, fathers, and brothers of victims are affected by the disease.
- *Avoid Gender Stereotypes.* Be cautious about assuming that men and women will respond differently to your message. Although some research suggests that women are socialized to be more emotional and empathic than men, other evidence suggests that men can be equally sensitive.[3] Modern social-science research also suggests that there may be no major differences between men and women in susceptibility to persuasive messages.[4] It is clear there are learned sex differences in language usage and nonverbal behavior, but we caution against making sweeping gender-based assumptions about your audience.

Sexual Orientation

An audience-centered speaker is sensitive to contemporary issues and attitudes related to sexual orientation. The audience-centered speaker's goal is to enhance understanding rather than create noise that may distract an audience from becoming listeners, regardless of the attitudes or beliefs audience members may hold about sexual orientation. Stories, illustrations, and humor whose point or punch line rely on ridiculing a person because of his or her sexual orientation may lower perceptions of your credibility, not only among gay and lesbian members of your audience, but also among audience members who disdain bias against gays and lesbians.

People evaluate credibility by behavior, not by intentions. Sometimes we unintentionally offend someone through more subtle misuse of language. For example, gays and lesbians typically prefer to be referred to as "gay" or "lesbian" rather than as "homosexual." Furthermore, it is not appropriate to single out gays and lesbians as separate categories of people who are assumed to hold political, ideological, or religious views that are consistently different from those of straight people. Monitor your language choice and use of illustrations and humor so that you don't alienate members of your audience.[5]

Culture, Ethnicity, and Race

Culture is a learned system of knowledge, behavior, attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms shared by a group of people. **Ethnicity** is that portion of a person's cultural background that relates to a national or religious heritage.

A person's **race** is his or her biological heritage—for example, Caucasian or Latino/Latina. There really aren't significant genetic differences among people who have been assigned to different racial categories.[6] So the term *race* is less accurate in attempting to describe a group of people than the term *ethnicity*, which, as we noted, is based on more factors than just genetics.

Different cultures have radically different expectations about public speaking. In Russia, for example, speakers have a "no frills" approach that emphasizes content over delivery. On the other hand, a presentation that seems perfectly sensible and acceptable to a U.S. businessperson who is accustomed to straightforward, problem-oriented logic may seem shockingly rude to a Chinese businessperson who expects more circuitous, less overtly purposeful rhetoric. And some African American audiences "come to participate in a speech event,"[7] expecting the speaker to generate audience response through rhythmic "call response formulas"[8] from the African American oral tradition.

As you approach any public-speaking situation, avoid an ethnocentric mindset. **Ethnocentrism** is an assumption that your own cultural approaches are superior to those of other cultures. The audience-centered speaker is sensitive to cultural differences and avoids saying things that would disparage the cultural backgrounds of the audience. When one of this book's authors taught public speaking for several semesters in the Bahamas, he shocked students by suggesting that they should achieve a conversational, informal delivery style. Many Bahamian audiences, he quickly discovered, expect formal oratory from their speakers, very much as U.S. audiences in the nineteenth century preferred the grandiloquence of Stephen A. Douglas to the quieter, homespun style of Abraham Lincoln. So your author had to embellish his own style when he taught the Bahamian class.

You need not have international students in your class to have a culturally diverse audience. Unique ethnic and cultural traditions thrive among people who have lived in the United States all their lives. Students from a Polish family in Chicago, a German family in Texas, and a Haitian family in Brooklyn all may be native U.S. citizens and still have cultural traditions different from your own. Effective public speakers seek to learn as much as possible about the cultural values and knowledge of their audience so that they can understand the best way to deliver their message.

Researchers classify or describe cultural differences along several lines.[9] As shown in the How To box, understanding these classifications can provide clues to help you adapt your message when you speak before diverse audiences.

HOW TO

Adapt to Cultural Values

Cultural Value	Cultural Characteristic	How to Adapt to Cultural Characteristic
Individualistic cultures	Individual achievement is emphasized more than group achievement.	• Stress the importance of individual rewards and recognition. • Identify how audience members will benefit from your ideas or proposal.

Cultural Value	Cultural Characteristic	How to Adapt to Cultural Characteristic
Collectivistic cultures	Group or team achievement is emphasized more than individual achievement.	• Recognize group or team accomplishments. Avoid singling out individuals. • Stress the importance of community values. • Help audience members to be perceived in a positive way for helping others.
High-context cultures	The context of a message—including nonverbal cues, tone of voice, posture, and facial expression—is often more important than the words.	• Don't boast about your specific accomplishments. Establish credibility in more indirect ways. • Use a subtle, less dramatic delivery style.
Low-context cultures	The words in a message are given more attention than the surrounding context.	• Be sure to make your ideas and recommendations explicit. • Although context cues from your delivery are important, use your words to clearly convey the details of your message.
Need for certainty	People dislike ambiguous messages and want specifics.	• Create a clear, logical organizational pattern for your speech. • Provide an explicit statement of your purpose. • Use concrete details and examples. • Explain action steps the audience can take.
Tolerance of uncertainty	People can accept ambiguity and are not bothered if they do not know all the details.	• The purpose of the speech need not be as explicitly explained. • You can use less specificity when suggesting solutions to problems.
High-power cultures	Status and power differences are emphasized; roles and chains of command are clearly defined.	• Convey the status or position of you or your sources to help establish credibility. • Develop messages or propose solutions that acknowledge differences in status among people.

(*continued*)

(*continued*)

Cultural Value	Cultural Characteristic	How to Adapt to Cultural Characteristic
Low-power cultures	Status and power differences receive less emphasis; people strive for equality rather than exalting those in positions of leadership.	• Discuss shared approaches to governance and leadership. • Develop solutions that involve others in reaching consensus.
Long-term time orientation	People accept that it may take a long time to accomplish goals; patience, persistence, and deferred gratification are valued.	• Appeal to listener's persistence, patience, and delayed gratification. • Emphasize how ideas and suggestions will benefit future generations.
Short-term time orientation	People are attuned to time and time management; quick responses to problems are valued.	• Explain actions and results that listeners can implement right now. • Identify the immediate impact that your ideas and proposals will have on listeners.

Group Membership It's said that each of us is a member of a gang—it's just that some gangs are more socially acceptable than others. We are social creatures; we congregate in groups to gain an identity, to help accomplish projects we support, and to have fun. So it's reasonable to assume that many of your listeners belong to groups, clubs, or organizations. Knowing what groups your listeners belong to can help you make inferences about their likes, dislikes, beliefs, and values.

Religious Groups Marsha is a follower of Scientology, and she believes that the philosophy outlined in *Dianetics* (the book that is the basis of Scientology) is as important as the religious precepts in the Bible. Planning to speak about Scientology to a Bible Belt college audience, many of whose members view Scientology as a cult, Marsha would be wise to consider how her listeners will respond to her message. This is not to suggest that she should refuse the speaking invitation. She should, however, be aware of her audience's religious beliefs as she prepares and presents her speech. When touching on religious beliefs or an audience's values, use great care in what you say and how you say it. Remind yourself that some members of your audience will undoubtedly not share your beliefs and that few beliefs are held as intensely as religious ones. If you do not wish to offend your listeners, plan and deliver your speech with much thought and sensitivity.

Political Groups Are members of your audience active in politics? Knowing whether your listeners are active in such groups as the Young Republicans or Young Democrats can help you to address political topics. Members of environmental or other special-interest groups may also hold strong political opinions on various topics and political candidates.

Work Groups Most professions give rise to organizations or associations to which professional people can belong. If you are speaking to an audience of professionals, it's important to be aware of professional organizations to which they may belong (there may be several) and to know, for example, whether such organizations have taken formal stands that may influence audience members' views on certain issues. Work groups also may use abbreviations or acronyms that can be useful to know. Your communication instructor, for example, may be a member of the National Communication Association (NCA) and may belong to a specific division of the NCA, such as the IDD (Instructional Development Division).

Social Groups Some groups exist just so that people can get together and enjoy a common activity. Book clubs, film clubs, cycling clubs, cooking groups, dancing groups, and bowling teams exist to bring people with similar ideas of fun together to enjoy the activity. Knowing whether members of your audience belong to such groups can help you to adapt your topic to them or, if you are involved in similar groups, to establish common ground with them.

Service Groups Many people are actively involved in groups that emphasize community service as their primary mission. If you are speaking to a service group such as the Lions Club or the Kiwanis Club, you can reasonably assume that your listeners value community service and will be interested in how to make their community a better place.

Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status is a person's perceived importance and influence based on such factors as income, occupation, and education level. In Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and other parts of the world, centuries-old traditions of acknowledging status differences still are important today. Status differences exist in the United States but are often more subtle. Having an idea about audience members' incomes, occupations, and education levels can be helpful as you develop a message that connects with listeners.

Income Having some general idea of the income level of your listeners can be of great value to you as a speaker. For example, if you know that most audience members are struggling to meet weekly expenses, it is unwise to talk about how to see the cultural riches of Europe by traveling first class. But a speech about how to get paid to travel to Europe by serving as a courier could hold considerable interest.

Occupation Knowing what people do for a living can give you useful information about how to adapt your message to them. Speaking to teachers, you will want to use different examples and illustrations than you would if you were speaking to lawyers, ministers, or automobile assembly-line workers. Many college-age students have jobs but don't yet hold the jobs they aspire to after they graduate from college. Knowing their future career plans can help you to adjust your topic and supporting material to your listeners' professional goals.

Education About one-third of U.S. high-school graduates obtain a college diploma. Less than 10 percent of the population earn graduate degrees. The educational background

of your listeners is yet another component of socioeconomic status that can help you to plan your message. For example, you have a good idea that your classmates in your college-level public-speaking class value education, because they are striving, often at great sacrifice, to advance their education. Knowing the educational background of your audience can help you to make decisions about your choice of vocabulary, your language style, and your use of examples and illustrations.

Adapting to Diverse Listeners The most recent U.S. census figures document what you already know from your own life experiences: We all live in an age of diversity. For example:

- Two-thirds of immigrants worldwide come to the United States.[10]
- It is estimated that more than 40 million U.S. residents speak something other than English as their first language, including 18 million people whose first language is Spanish.[11]
- Whites are the minority ethnic group in nearly half of the largest cities in the United States.[12]
- People who have traditionally been called minorities are now in the majority in four states: Hawaii (75 percent), New Mexico (57 percent), California (57 percent), and Texas (52 percent).[13]
- During the past decade in the United States, the combined population of African Americans, Native Americans, Asians, Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics grew thirteen times faster than the non-Hispanic white population.[14]

Virtually every state in the United States has experienced a dramatic increase in foreign-born residents. If trends go on as they have during the past quarter-century, cultural and ethnic diversity will continue to grow during your lifetime. This swell of immigrants translates to increased diversity in all aspects of society, including most audiences you'll face—whether in business, at school-board meetings, or in your college or university classes.

Audience diversity, however, involves more factors than just ethnic and cultural differences. Central to our point about considering your audience is examining the full spectrum of audience diversity, not just cultural differences. Each topic that we've reviewed when discussing demographic and psychological aspects of an audience contributes to overall audience diversity. Diversity simply means differences. Audience members are diverse. The question and challenge for a public speaker is "How do I adapt to listeners with such different backgrounds and experiences?" We offer several general strategies. You could decide to focus on a target audience, consciously use a variety of methods of adapting to listeners, seek common ground, or consider using powerful visual images to present your key points.

Focus on a Target Audience A **target audience** is a specific segment of your audience that you most want to address or influence. You've undoubtedly been a target of skilled communicators and might not have been aware that messages had been tailored just for you. For example, most colleges and universities spend a considerable amount

of time and money encouraging students to apply for admission. You probably received some of this recruitment literature in the mail during your high-school years. But not every student in the United States receives brochures from the same colleges. Colleges and universities targeted you on the basis of your test scores, your interests, where you live, and your involvement in school-sponsored or extracurricular activities. Likewise, as a public speaker, you might want to think about the portion of your audience that you most want to understand or be convinced of your message.

The challenge in consciously focusing on a target audience is not to lose or alienate the rest of your listeners—to keep the entire audience in mind while simultaneously making a specific attempt to hit your target segment. For example, Sasha was trying to convince his listeners to invest in the stock market instead of relying on the Social Security system. He wisely decided to focus on the younger listeners; those approaching retirement age have already made their major investment decisions. Although he focused on the younger members of his audience, Sasha didn't forget the mature listeners. He suggested that older listeners encourage their children or grandchildren to consider his proposal. He focused on a target audience but didn't ignore others.

Use Diverse Strategies for a Diverse Audience Another approach you can adopt, either separately or in combination with a target audience focus, is to use a variety of strategies to reflect the diversity of your audience. On the basis of your efforts to gather information about your audience, you should know the various constituencies that will likely be present for your talk. The How To box describes several methods you can use to reach the different listeners in your audience.

HOW TO

Use Diverse Strategies

These strategies can help you to reach a majority of the people in a diverse audience:

- *Use a variety of types of supporting materials.* If you're very uncertain about cultural preferences, use a balance of both logical support (statistics, facts, specific examples) and emotional support (stories and illustrations).
- *Remember the power of stories.* People from most cultures appreciate a good story. And some people, such as those from Asian and Middle Eastern cultures, *prefer* hearing stories and parables used to make a point or support an argument, rather than facts and statistics.
- *Add visual support.* Consider showing the audience an outline of your key ideas using a PowerPoint™. If there is a language barrier between you and your audience, being able to read portions of your speech as they hear you speaking may improve audience members' comprehension. If an interpreter is translating your message, an outline can also help to ensure that your interpreter will communicate your message accurately.

Identify Common Values People have debated for a long time whether there are universal human values. Several scholars have made strong arguments that common human values do exist. Communication researcher David Kale suggests that all people can identify with the individual struggle to enhance one's own dignity and worth, although different cultures express that in different ways.[15] A second common value is the search for a world at peace. Underlying that quest is a fundamental desire for equilibrium, balance, and stability. Although there may always be a small but corrosive minority of people whose actions do not support the universal value of peace, the prevailing human values in most cultures ultimately do support peace.

Cultural anthropologists specialize in the study of behavior that is common to all humans. Cultural anthropologist Donald Brown has compiled a list of hundreds of "surface" universals of beliefs, emotions, or behavior. According to Brown, people in all cultures:[16]

- Have beliefs about death.
- Have a childhood fear of strangers.
- Have a division of labor by sex.
- Experience certain emotions and feelings, such as envy, pain, jealousy, shame, and pride.
- Use facial expressions to express emotions.
- Have rules for etiquette.
- Experience empathy.
- Value some degree of collaboration or cooperation.
- Experience conflict and seek to manage or mediate it.

Of course, not all cultures have the same beliefs about death or the same way of dividing up labor, but people in all cultures address these issues.

Intercultural communication scholars Larry Samovar and Richard Porter suggest other commonalities among people from all cultures. They propose that all humans seek physical as well as emotional and psychological pleasure and confirmation and seek to avoid personal harm.[17] Although each culture defines what constitutes pleasure and pain, it may be useful to interpret human behavior with these general assumptions in mind. People also realize that their biological lives will end, that to some degree each person is isolated from all other human beings, that we each make choices, and that each person seeks to give life meaning. These similarities offer some basis for developing common messages with universal meaning.

Identifying common cultural issues and similarities can help you to establish common ground with your audience. If you are speaking about an issue on which you and your audience have widely different views, identifying a larger common value that is relevant to your topic (such as the importance of peace, prosperity, or family) can help you to find a foothold so that your audience will at least listen to your ideas.

Rely on Visual Materials That Transcend Language Differences Pictures and images can communicate universal messages—especially emotional ones. Although there is no universal language, most listeners, regardless of culture and language, can comprehend visible expressions of pain, joy, sorrow, and happiness. An image of a mother

holding the frail, malnourished body of her dying child communicates the ravages of famine without elaborate verbal explanations. The more varied your listeners' cultural experiences, the more effective it can be to use visual materials to illustrate your ideas.

QUICK CHECK

Adapting to Diverse Listeners

- Focus on a target audience without losing or alienating the rest of your listeners.
- Use diverse supporting materials that reflect a balance of logical and emotional support.
- Use visual aids.
- Appeal to such common values as peace, prosperity, and family.

Psychological Audience Analysis

Demographic information lets you make some useful inferences about your audience and predict likely responses. Learning how the members of your audience feel about your topic and purpose can provide specific clues about possible reactions. A **psychological audience analysis** explores an audience's attitudes toward a topic, purpose, and speaker while probing the underlying beliefs and values that might affect these attitudes. The attitudes, beliefs, and values of an audience may greatly influence a speaker's selection of a topic and specific purpose as well as various other aspects of speech preparation and delivery.

Understanding Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values An **attitude** reflects likes or dislikes. Do you like health food? Are you for or against capital punishment? Should movies be censored? What are your views on nuclear energy? Your answers to these widely varied questions reflect your attitudes.

A **belief** is what you hold to be true or false. If you think the sun will rise in the east in the morning, you hold a belief about the sun based on what you perceive to be true or false.

A **value** is an enduring concept of good and bad, right and wrong. More deeply ingrained than either attitudes or beliefs, values are therefore more resistant to change. Values support both attitudes and beliefs. For example, you like health food because you believe that natural products are more healthful. And you *value* good health. You are against capital punishment because you believe that it is wrong to kill people. You *value* human life. As with beliefs, a speaker who has some understanding of an audience's values is better able to adapt a speech to them.

Analyzing Attitudes Toward a Topic The topic of a speech provides one focus for an audience's attitudes, beliefs, and values. It is useful to know how members of an audience feel about your topic. Are they interested or apathetic? How much do they already know about the topic? If the topic is controversial, are their attitudes

toward it positive or negative? Knowing the answers to these questions from the outset lets you adjust your message accordingly. For example, if you plan to talk about increasing taxes to improve education in your state, you probably want to know how your listeners feel about taxes and education.

When you are analyzing your audience, it may help to categorize the group along three dimensions: interested–uninterested, favorable–unfavorable, and captive–voluntary, as summarized in the How To box. With an *interested* audience, your task is simply to hold and amplify interest throughout the speech. If your audience is *uninterested*, you need to find ways to "hook" the members. Given our visually oriented culture, consider using visual aids to gain and maintain the attention of apathetic listeners.

You may also want to gauge how *favorable* or *unfavorable* your audience is likely to feel toward you and your message before you begin to speak. Some audiences, of course, are neutral, apathetic, or simply uninformed about what you plan to say. But even if your objective is simply to inform, it is useful to know whether your audience is predisposed to respond positively or negatively toward you or your message. Giving an informative talk about classical music would be quite challenging, for example, if you were addressing an audience full of die-hard punk-rock fans. You might decide to show the connections between classical music and punk rock to arouse their interest.

HOW TO

Adapt to Audience Attitudes

Type of Audience	Example	How to Be Audience-Centered
Interested	Mayors who attend a talk by the governor about increasing security and reducing the threat of terrorism	Acknowledge audience interest early in your speech; use the interest they have in you and your topic to gain and maintain their attention.
Uninterested	Middle-school students attending a lecture about retirement benefits	Make it a high priority to tell your listeners why your message should be of interest to them.
Favorable	A religious group that meets to hear a speech about the importance of their beliefs	Use the audience's initial positive attitude to move them even closer to your speaking goal; explicitly tell them in your speech conclusion what you would like them to do.
Unfavorable	Students who attend a lecture by the university president explaining upcoming tuition increases	Be realistic in what you expect to accomplish; acknowledge their opposing point of view; consider using facts to refute misperceptions they may hold.

Voluntary	Parents attending a lecture by the new principal at their children's school	Anticipate why they are coming to hear you, and speak about the issues they want you to address.
Captive	Students in a public-speaking class	Find out who will be in your audience, and use this knowledge to adapt your message to them.

Your Speech Class as Audience You might think that your public-speaking class is not a typical audience because class members are required to attend. Your speech class is a *captive* audience rather than a *voluntary* one. A captive audience has externally imposed reasons for being there (such as a requirement to attend class). Because class members must show up to earn credit for class, you need not worry that they will get up and leave during your speech. However, your classroom speeches are still real speeches. Your class members are certainly real people with likes, dislikes, beliefs, and values.

Your classroom speeches should connect with your listeners so that they forget they are required to be in the audience. Class members should listen because your message has given them new and useful information, touched them emotionally, or persuaded them to change their opinion or behavior in support of your position.

You will undoubtedly give other speeches to other captive audiences. Audiences at work or at professional meetings are often captive in the sense that they may be required to attend lectures or presentations to receive continuing-education credit or as part of their job duties. Your goal with a captive audience is the same as with other types of audiences. You should make your speech just as interesting and effective as one designed for a voluntary audience. You still have an obligation to address your listeners' needs and interests and to keep them engaged in what you have to say. A captive audience gives you an opportunity to polish your speaking skills.

Analyzing Attitudes Toward You, the Speaker Audience members' attitude toward you in your role as speaker is another factor that can influence their reaction to your speech. Regardless of how they feel about your topic or purpose, if members of an audience regard you as credible, they will be much more likely to be interested in, and supportive of, what you have to say.

Your credibility—other people's perception of you as trustworthy, knowledgeable, and interesting—is one of the main factors that will shape your audience's attitude toward you. If you establish your credibility before you begin to discuss your topic, your listeners will be more likely to believe what you say and to perceive you as dynamic.

For example, when a high-school health teacher asks a former drug addict to speak to a class about the dangers of cocaine addiction, the teacher recognizes that the speaker's experiences make him knowledgeable—and thus credible—and that his message will be far more convincing than if the teacher just lectured on the perils of cocaine use.

An audience's positive attitude toward a speaker can overcome negative or apathetic attitudes they may have toward the speaker's topic or purpose. If your analysis reveals that your audience does not recognize you as an authority on your subject, you will need to build your credibility into the speech. If you have had personal experience with your topic, be sure to let the audience know. You will gain credibility instantly. In Chapters 9 and 17, we provide additional strategies for enhancing your credibility.

Situational Audience Analysis

So far, we have concentrated on the people who will be your listeners as the primary focus of being an audience-centered speaker. You should also consider your speaking situation. **Situational audience analysis** includes an examination of the time and place of your speech, the size of your audience, and the speaking occasion. Although these elements are not technically characteristics of the audience, they can have a major effect on how your listeners respond to you.

Time You may have no control over when you will be speaking, but in designing and delivering a talk, a skilled public speaker considers the time of day as well as audience expectations about the speech length. If you are speaking to a group of exhausted parents during a midweek evening meeting of the band-boosters club, you can bet they will appreciate a direct, to-the-point presentation more than a long oration. If you are on a program with other speakers, speaking first or last on the program carries a slight edge, because people tend to remember what comes first or last. Speaking early in the morning when people might not be quite awake, after lunch when they might feel a bit drowsy, or late in the afternoon when they are tired may mean that you'll have to strive consciously for a more energetic delivery to keep your listeners' attention.

Also be mindful of your time limits. If your audience expects you to speak for twenty minutes, it is usually better to end right at twenty minutes or even a little earlier; most North Americans don't appreciate being kept overtime for a speech. In your public-speaking class, you will be given time limits, and you might wonder whether you will encounter such strict time-limit expectations outside of public-speaking class. The answer is a most definite yes. Whether it's a business presentation or a speech to the city council or school board, time limits are often strictly enforced.

Location In your speech class, you have the advantage of knowing what the room looks like, but in a new speaking situation, you might not have that advantage. If at all possible, visit the place where you will speak to examine the physical setting and find out, for example, how far the audience will be from the lectern. Physical conditions such as room temperature and lighting can affect your performance, audience response, and the overall success of the speech.

Room arrangement and decor can affect the way an audience responds. Be aware of the arrangement and appearance of the room in which you will speak. If your speaking environment is less than ideal, you might need to work especially hard to hold your audience's attention. Although you probably will not be able to make major changes in the speaking environment, it is ultimately up to you to obtain the best speaking

environment you can. The arrangement of chairs, placement of audiovisual materials, and opening or closing of drapes should all be under your control.

Size of Audience The size of your audience directly affects speaking style and audience expectations about delivery. As a general rule, the larger the audience, the more likely they are to expect a relatively formal style. With an audience of ten or fewer, you can punctuate a very conversational style by taking questions from your listeners. If you and your listeners are so few that you can be seated around a table, they may expect you to stay seated for your presentation. Many business "speeches" are given around a conference table.

A group of between twenty and thirty people—the size of most public-speaking classes—will expect more formality than will an audience of a dozen or fewer. Your speaking style can still be conversational, but your speech should be appropriately structured and well organized; your delivery may include more expansive gestures than you would display during a one-on-one chat with a friend or colleague.

Audiences that fill a lecture hall will still appreciate a direct, conversational style, but your gestures may increase in size, and if your voice will be unamplified, you will be expected to speak with enough volume and intensity that people in the last row can hear you.

Occasion Another important way to gain clues about your listeners is to consider the reason this audience is here. What occasion brings this audience together? The mindset of people who have gathered for a funeral will obviously be different from that of people who have asked you to say a few words after a banquet. Knowing the occasion helps you to predict both demographic characteristics of the audience and the members' psychological state of mind.

If you're presenting a speech at an annual or monthly meeting, you have the advantage of being able to ask people who have attended previous presentations what kind of audience typically gathers for the occasion. Your best source of information may be either the person who invited you to speak or someone who has attended similar events. Knowing when you will speak on the program or whether a meal will be served before or after you talk will help you to gauge what your audience expects from you.

In preparing for a speaking assignment, ask the following questions, and use the answers to guide you in adapting your presentation to the speaking situation:

- How many people are expected to attend the speech?
- What is the occasion that brings the audience together?
- At what time of day will I be speaking and where will I appear on the program?
- What are the length limitations on my talk? Does the total allotted time include time for a question-and-answer session?
- How will the audience seating be arranged? Can I rearrange the seats?
- How close will I be to the audience?
- Will I speak from a lectern?

- Will I be expected to use a microphone?
- Will I have adequate equipment for my visual aids? Is there anyone available to help me with sound and visual equipment?
- What is the room lighting like? Will the audience seating area be darkened beyond a lighted stage? Can I control any aspects of the room lighting?
- Will there be noises or other distractions outside the room?

Preparation will help you to avoid last-minute surprises about the speaking environment and the physical arrangements for your speech. A well-prepared speaker adapts his or her message not only to the audience but also to the speaking environment.

Keep in mind that when you arrive to give your speech, you can make changes in the previous speaker's room arrangements. For example, the purpose of the speaker immediately before Yue Hong was to generate interest in a memorial for Asian Americans who had fought in Vietnam. Because the previous speaker wanted to make sure the audience felt free to ask questions, the chairs were arranged in a semicircle, and the lights were turned on. But Yue Hong was giving a more formal presentation on the future of the Vietnamese population, which included a brief slide show. So when the preceding speaker had finished, Yue Hong rearranged the chairs and darkened the room.

QUICK CHECK

The Speaking Situation

Learn all you can about:

- The timing of your speech
- The place you'll be speaking
- The size and placement of the audience
- The speaking occasion

5.f Adapting to Your Audience as You Speak

Analysis and adaptation do not end when you have crafted your speech. They continue as you deliver your speech. Many beginning public speakers may find it challenging at first not only to have the responsibility of presenting a speech they have rehearsed, but also to have to change or modify the speech on the spot. We assure you that with experience, you can develop the sensitivity to adapt to your listeners, much as a jazz musician adapts to the other musicians in the ensemble, but it will take practice.

Generally, a public speaker does not have an exchange with the audience unless the speech is part of a question-and-answer or discussion format. Once the speech is in progress, the speaker must rely on nonverbal cues from the audience to judge how people are responding to the message.

Identifying Nonverbal Audience Cues

Once, when speaking in India, Mark Twain was denied eye contact with his listeners by a curtain separating him from his audience. Mark Twain's daughter, Clara, recalled this experience:

> One of Father's first lectures was before a Purdah audience; in other words, the women all sat behind a curtain through which they could peek at Mark Twain without being seen by him . . . a deadly affair for the poor humorist, who had not even the pleasure of scanning the faces of his mute audience.[18]

Mark Twain missed learning how well his speech was being received as he was speaking. You could experience the same disadvantage if you fail to look at your listeners while you're speaking.

Although it's not possible to read your listeners' minds, it is important to analyze and adapt to often unspoken cues that can enhance the effectiveness of your message. The first step in developing this skill is to be aware of the cues that let you know whether your audience is hanging on every word or is bored. Study Table 5.2 to learn to recognize five types of cues your listeners will give you. After learning to "read" your audience, you then need to consider developing a repertoire of behaviors to help you to connect with your listeners.

Responding to Nonverbal Cues

The value in recognizing nonverbal cues from your listeners is that you can respond to these cues appropriately. If your audience seems interested, supportive, and attentive, then your prespeech analysis has clearly led you to make good choices in preparing and delivering your speech.

When your audience becomes inattentive, however, you might need to make some changes while delivering your message. If you think audience members are drifting off into their own thoughts or disagreeing with what you say or if you suspect that they don't understand what you are saying, then a few spontaneous changes may help. It takes experience and skill to make on-the-spot changes in your speech. Consider the following tips from seasoned public speakers for adapting to your listeners.[19]

If your audience seems inattentive or bored:

- Tell a story.
- Use an example to which the audience can relate.
- Use a personal example.
- Remind your listeners why your message should be of interest to them.
- Eliminate some abstract facts and statistics.

TABLE 5.2 *Important Nonverbal Audience Cues*

Type of Cue	You Probably ARE Connecting with Your Audience if . . .	You Are NOT Connecting with Your Audience if . . .
Eye Contact	Most audience members look you in the eye while you are speaking.	Audience members don't make eye contact with you. They make look down, at their phones or watches, or at the program.
Facial Expression	Audience members have sincere smiles or pleasant facial expressions.	Audience members frown or display the "listener stupor" look—a blank or unresponsive facial expression, accompanied by a slightly tilted head, often with a hand holding up the chin, that indicates they are probably daydreaming.
Movement	Audience members sit fairly still.	Audience members fidget, squirm, or increase their general body movement.
Nonverbal Responsiveness	• Audience members nod in agreement, laugh at your humor, or applaud frequently. • Audience members respond promptly to your invitations, such as requests for information or a show of hands.	• Audience members do not nod, laugh, or applaud much. • Audience members are slow and sheepish about responding to your invitations.
Verbal Responsiveness	Audience members may shout out comments or answers to questions, or remark quietly about your presentation to the people near them.	Audience members do not respond to questions. They may shout out negative comments or talk to people near them about topics unrelated to your talk.

- Use appropriate humor. If listeners do not respond to your humor, use more stories or personal illustrations.
- Consider making direct references to the audience, using members' names or mentioning something about them.
- Encourage the audience to participate by asking questions or asking them for an example.
- Ask for a direct response, such as a show of hands, to see whether they agree or disagree with you.
- Pick up the pace of your delivery.
- Pause for dramatic effect and to gain attention.

If your audience seems confused or doesn't seem to understand your point:

- Be more redundant.
- Try phrasing your information in another way.
- Use more concrete examples to illustrate your point.
- Use a visual aid such as a chalkboard or flipchart to clarify your point.
- If you have been speaking rapidly, slow your speaking rate.
- Clarify the overall organization of your message for your listeners.
- Ask audience members whether they understand your message.
- Ask for feedback from an audience member to help you discover what is unclear.
- Ask someone in the audience to summarize the key point you are making.

If your audience seems to be disagreeing with your message:

- Provide additional data and evidence to support your point.
- Remind your listeners of your credibility, credentials, or background.
- Rely less on anecdotes and more on facts to present your case.
- Write facts on a chalkboard, overhead transparency, or flipchart if one is handy.
- If you don't have the answers and data you need, tell listeners that you will provide more information by mail, telephone, or e-mail (and make sure you get back in touch with them).

Remember, it is not enough just to notice your listeners' characteristics and attitudes. You must also *respond* to the information you gather, by adapting your speech to retain their interest and attention. Moreover, you have a responsibility to ensure that your audience understands your message. If your approach to the content of your speech is not working, alter it and note whether your audience's responses change.

If all else fails, you may need to abandon a formal speaker–listener relationship with your audience and open up your topic for discussion. Of course, in your speech class, your instructor may expect you to keep going, to fulfill the requirements for your assignment. With other audiences, however, you might want to consider switching to a more interactive question-and-answer session to ensure that you are communicating clearly. Later chapters on supporting material, speech organization, and speech delivery will discuss more techniques for adjusting your style while delivering your message.

Strategies for Customizing Your Message to Your Audience

Many people value having something prepared especially for them. Perhaps you have bought a computer that you ordered to your exact specifications. In a restaurant, you order food prepared to your specific tastes. Audiences, too, prefer messages that are adapted just to them; people don't like hearing a canned message. As a speaker, you

may have worked hard to adapt your message to your audience, but your audience won't give you credit for adapting your message to them unless you let them know that you've done so. In the following sections, we discuss some ways to communicate to your listeners that your message is designed specifically for them.

Appropriately Use Audience Members' Names Consider using audience members' names in your talk to relate specific information to individual people. Obviously, you don't want to embarrass people by using them in an example that would make them feel uncomfortable. But you can selectively mention people you know who are in the audience. It's become a standard technique in many State of the Union speeches for the President to have someone sitting in the balcony who can be mentioned in his talk. That person becomes a living visual aid to provide focus for an idea or point made in the address. If you are uncertain whether you should mention someone by name, ask the person, before you speak, for permission to use his or her name in your talk.

Refer to the Town, City, or Community Make a specific reference to the place where you are speaking. If you are speaking to a college audience, relate your message and illustrations to the school where you are speaking. Many politicians use this technique: They have a standard stump speech to tout their credentials but adapt the opening part of their message to the specific city or community in which they are speaking. Presidential candidates may comment on how wonderful it is to be in Iowa during caucus season, for example.

Refer to a Significant Event That Happened on the Date of Your Speech Most libraries have books (such as the *Speaker's Lifetime Library*) that identify significant events in world or national history.[20] An even easier way to find out what happened on any given day in history is to go to www.history.com and click on the link called "This Day in History." Then type in any date, and you'll quickly discover any number of events that occurred on that day. For example, on the date when this paragraph was written, Julius Caesar was assassinated in 44 B.C.E. This date is also known as the Ides of March—a day that Caesar was warned about in Shakespeare's famous play. If you were giving a speech on this day, a reference to the Ides of March might be especially apropos if your goal was to encourage your audience to beware of whatever issue or topic you were discussing.

Many newspapers keep records of local historical events and list what happened ten, twenty-five, or fifty years ago on a certain date. Relating your talk to a local historical event that occurred on the same date as your talk can give your message a feeling of immediacy. It tells your audience that you have thought about this specific speaking event.

Refer to a Recent News Event Always read the local paper to see whether there is a local news story that you can connect to the central idea of your talk. Or perhaps you can use a headline from your university newspaper or a recent story that appeared on your university's Web site. If there is a newspaper headline that connects

with your talk, consider holding up the paper as you refer to it—not so that people will be able to read the headline, but to emphasize the immediacy of your message.

Refer to a Group or Organization If you're speaking to an audience of service, religious, political, or work group members, by all means make specific positive references to the group. But be honest—don't offer false praise. Audiences can sniff out phony flattery. A sincere compliment about the group will be appreciated, especially if you can link the goals of the group to the goal of your talk.

Relate Information Directly to Your Listeners Find ways to apply facts, statistics, and examples to the people in your audience. If, for example, you know that four out of ten women are likely to experience gender discrimination, customize that statistic by saying, "Forty percent of women listening to me now are likely to experience gender discrimination. That means of the twenty women in this audience, eight of you are likely to be discriminated against." Or if you live in a city of fifty thousand people, you can cite the statistic that fifty thousand people on our nation's highways become victims of drunk driving each year and then point out that this number is equivalent to killing every man, woman, and child in your city. Relating abstract statistics and examples to your listeners communicates that you have them in mind as you develop your message.

QUICK CHECK

Customizing Your Message

Make sure your audience knows that you prepared your talk just for them:

- Mention the audience's group, or use individual names, if appropriate.
- Mention the place where you're speaking or a recent local news event.
- Relate an event from history to the date of your speech.
- Show how abstract statistics apply to the audience.

Avoid pandering to listeners or making up information.

5.g Analyzing Your Audience After You Speak

After you have given your speech, you're still not finished analyzing your audience. It is important to evaluate your audience's positive or negative response to your message. Why? Because this evaluation can help you to prepare your next speech. Postspeech analysis helps you to polish your speaking skill, regardless of whether you will face the

same audience again. From that analysis, you can learn whether your examples were clear and whether listeners accepted your message. Let's look at some specific methods for assessing your audience's response to your speech.

Nonverbal Responses

The most obvious nonverbal response is applause. Is the audience simply clapping politely, or is the applause robust and enthusiastic, indicating pleasure and acceptance? Responsive facial expressions, smiles, and nods are other nonverbal signs that the speech has been well received.

Realize, however, that audience members from different cultures respond to speeches in different ways. Japanese audience members, for example, are likely to be restrained in their response to a speech and to show little expression. Some Eastern European listeners might not maintain eye contact with you; they may look down at the floor when listening. In some contexts, African American listeners may enthusiastically voice their agreement or disagreement with something you say during your presentation.[21]

Nonverbal responses at the end of the speech may express some general feeling of the audience, but they are not much help in identifying which strategies were the most effective. Also consider what the members of the audience say, both to you and to others, after your speech.

Verbal Responses

What might members of the audience say to you about your speech? General comments such as "I enjoyed your talk" or "Great speech" are good for the ego—which is important—but are not of much analytic help. Specific comments can indicate where you succeeded and where you failed. If you have the chance, try to ask audience members how they responded to the speech in general as well as to points in which you are particularly interested.

Survey Responses

You are already aware of the value of conducting audience surveys before speaking publicly. You might also want to survey your audience after you speak. You can then assess how well you accomplished your objective. Use the same survey techniques that we discussed earlier. Develop survey questions that will help you to determine the audience's general reactions to you and your speech as well as specific responses to your ideas and supporting materials. Professional speakers and public officials often conduct such surveys. Postspeech surveys are especially useful when you are trying to persuade an audience. Comparing prespeech and postspeech attitudes can give you a clear idea of your effectiveness. A significant portion of most political-campaign budgets goes toward evaluating how a candidate is being received by his or her constituents. Politicians want to know what portions of their messages are acceptable to their audiences so that they can use this information in the future.

If your objective was to teach your audience about some new idea, a posttest can assess whether you expressed your ideas clearly. In fact, classroom exams are posttests that determine whether your instructor presented information clearly.

Behavioral Responses

If the purpose of your speech was to persuade your listeners to do something, you will want to learn whether they ultimately behave as you intended. If you wanted them to vote in an upcoming election, you might survey your listeners to find out how many did vote. If you wanted to win support for a particular cause or organization, you might ask them to sign a petition after your speech. The number of signatures would be a clear measure of your speech's success. Some religious speakers judge the success of their ministry by the amount of contributions they receive. Your listeners' actions are the best indicators of your speaking success.

QUICK CHECK

Ways to Analyze Your Audience After Speaking

- Quality of applause and other nonverbal responses
- Content and tone of specific verbal comments
- Formal survey responses
- Actions or behaviors

STUDY GUIDE

Remember These Main Ideas

- At each stage in crafting your speech, you must be mindful of your audience.
- Gather information informally by observing your listeners or asking general questions or formally by administering a survey.
- When you analyze information you've gathered, look for audience members' similarities and differences and for ways in which you might be able to establish common ground with them.
- Ethically adapt to your audience to help your audience clearly understand your message and to achieve your speaking objective.
- Identify your audience's demographic makeup, such as age; gender; sexual orientation; culture, ethnicity, and race; group membership; and socioeconomic status.
- Adapt to diverse listeners by focusing on a target audience, using strategies for a diverse audience, identifying common values, and relying on visual materials that transcend language differences.
- Analyze your audience psychologically by exploring their attitudes toward topic, purpose, and speaker while probing the underlying beliefs and values that might affect these attitudes.
- You can categorize audience attitudes as ranging from interested to uninterested, favorable to unfavorable, and captive to voluntary.
- Situational audience analysis includes an examination of the time and place of your speech, the size of your audience, and the speaking occasion.
- Keep analyzing to the audience while you're speaking. Use audience cues such as eye contact, facial expression, movement, nonverbal responsiveness, and verbal responsiveness to help you adapt while on your feet.
- Don't stop analyzing when you stop speaking. Use applause and nonverbal cues as signs that the speech has been well received. Use specific comments, survey responses, or listeners' behavior not only to help you gauge the success of the speech as a whole, but also to target specific aspects that worked well or need improvement.

Understand These Key Terms

attitude (p. 101)
audience adaptation (p. 89)
audience analysis (p. 87)
belief (p. 101)
closed-ended questions (p. 87)
common ground (p. 88)
credibility (p. 91)
culture (p. 93)
demographic audience analysis (p. 91)
demographics (p. 84)
ethnicity (p. 93)
ethnocentrism (p. 94)

gender (p. 92)
open-ended questions (p. 87)
psychological audience analysis (p. 101)
race (p. 94)
relationship (p. 88)
situational audience analysis (p. 104)
socioeconomic status (p. 97)
target audience (p. 98)
value (p. 101)

Think about These Questions

- Phil Owens is running for a seat on the school board. He has agreed to speak to the chamber of commerce about his views, but he wants to know what his audience believes about a number of issues. How can he gather this information?
- Marianne strongly believes that the drinking age should be raised to 22 in her state. When she surveyed her classmates, the overwhelming majority thought the drinking age should be lowered to 18. Should Marianne change the topic and purpose of her speech to avoid facing a hostile audience? Why or why not?
- Dr. Ruiz thought that the audience for her speech on birth control would be women of childbearing age. After writing her speech, however, she found out that all the women to whom she will be speaking are at least twenty years older than she expected. What changes, if any, should she make?
- You're in the middle of your presentation, trying to persuade a group of investors to build a new shopping mall in your community. You notice a few audience members losing eye contact with you, shifting in their seats, and glancing at their phones. What do you do to regain their attention?

Learn More Online

The Five Layers of Audience Analysis The American Communication Association's *Open Knowledge Guide to Public Speaking* discusses five key areas you should analyze when preparing to speak.
http://textcommons.org/node/45

Designing Surveys and Questionnaires This free tutorial promises to teach you everything you ever wanted to know about surveys.
http://www.statpac.com/surveys/

How to Deal with an Unhappy Audience This very short video offers you a pep talk and tips for coping with a difficult speaking challenge.
http://www.howtodothings.com/video/how-to-deal-with-an-unhappy-audience

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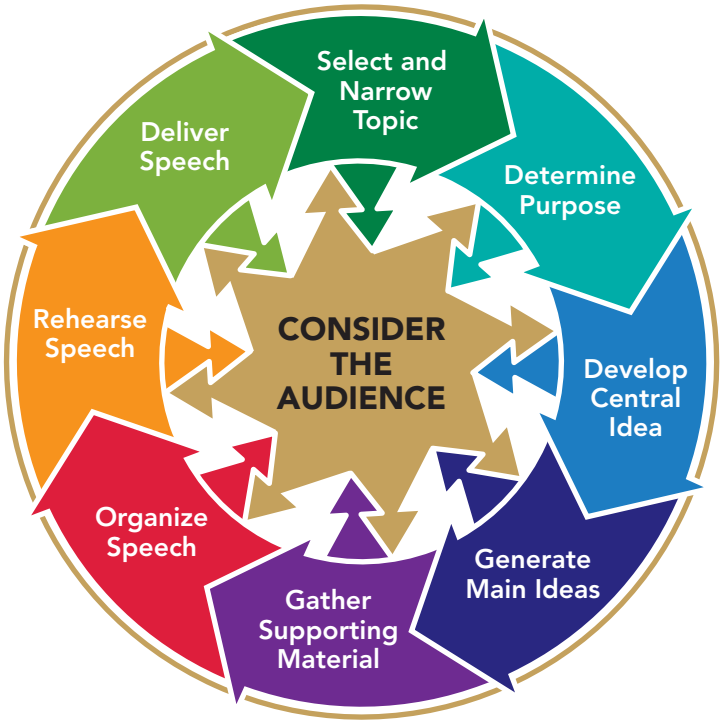

Preparing a Speech

3

6 Developing Your Speech
7 Gathering and Using Supporting Material

Questions to Guide You Through This Section:

6 Developing Your Speech

To answer the question…	Go to page…
What should I talk about?	118
What's the goal of my speech?	125
What is a central idea?	129
How can I identify the main ideas in my speech?	132

7 Gathering and Using Supporting Material

To answer the question…	Go to page…
Can I do my speech research online?	143
Why would I want to do library research for my speech?	147
How can I get the most out of an interview with a source?	150
I need to make a bibliography. What do I include in it?	152
How can I decide which information is the most useful?	154
Now that I've got all this information, how do I use it in my speech?	156

Developing Your Speech 6

"In all matters, before beginning, a diligent preparation should be made."

—Cicero

OUTLINE

6.a Select and Narrow Your Topic
Guidelines for Selecting a Topic
Strategies for Selecting a Topic
Narrowing the Topic

6.b Determine Your Purpose
General Purpose
Specific Purpose

6.c Develop Your Central Idea
A Complete Declarative Sentence
Direct, Specific Language
A Single Idea
An Audience-Centered Idea

6.d Generate and Preview Your Main Ideas
Generating Your Main Ideas
Previewing Your Main Ideas

6.e Meanwhile, Back at the Computer . . .

Ed Garcia has arranged the books and papers on his desk into neat, even piles. He has sharpened his pencils and laid them out parallel to one another. He has even dusted his desktop and cleaned the computer monitor's screen. Ed can think of no other task to delay writing his speech. He opens a new word-processing document, carefully centers the words "Informative Speech" at the top of the first page, and then slouches in his chair, staring glumly at the blank expanse that threatens his well-being. Finally, he types the words "College Football" under the words "Informative Speech." There is another long pause. Hesitantly, he begins his first sentence: "Today I want to talk to you about college football." Rereading his first ten words, Ed decides that they sound moronic. He deletes the sentence and tries again. This time, the screen looks even blanker than before. He writes—deletes—writes—deletes. Half an hour later, Ed is exhausted and still mocked by a blank screen. And he is frantic—this speech has to be ready by nine in the morning.

Getting from a blank screen or sheet of paper to a speech outline is often the biggest hurdle you will face as a public speaker. Fortunately, however, it is one that you can learn to clear. If your earlier efforts at speech writing have been like Ed Garcia's, take heart. Just as you learned to read, do long division, drive a car, and get through college registration, so too can you learn to prepare a speech.

The first steps in preparing a speech are these:

1. Select and narrow your topic.
2. Determine your purpose.
3. Develop your central idea.
4. Generate and preview your main ideas.

At the end of step 4, you will have a plan for the speech, and you will be ready to develop and polish your main ideas further. For most brief classroom speeches (under ten minutes), you should allow at least one week between selecting a topic and delivering your speech. A week gives you enough time to develop and research your speech. Many habitual procrastinators, like Ed Garcia, who grudgingly decide to begin an assignment a week in advance learn to their surprise that the whole process is far easier than it would be if they put off working until the night before they are supposed to deliver their speech.

As we observed in Chapter 5, audience-centered speakers consider the needs, interests, and expectations of their audience during the entire speech-preparation process—needs, interests, and expectations that will be as diverse as the audiences themselves. As you move from topic selection to speech plan, remember that you are preparing a message for your listeners. Always keep the audience as your central focus.

6.a Select and Narrow Your Topic

Your first task, as illustrated in Figure 6.1, is to choose a topic on which to speak. You will then need to narrow this topic to fit your time limits. Sometimes you can eliminate one or both of these steps because the topic has been chosen and properly defined for

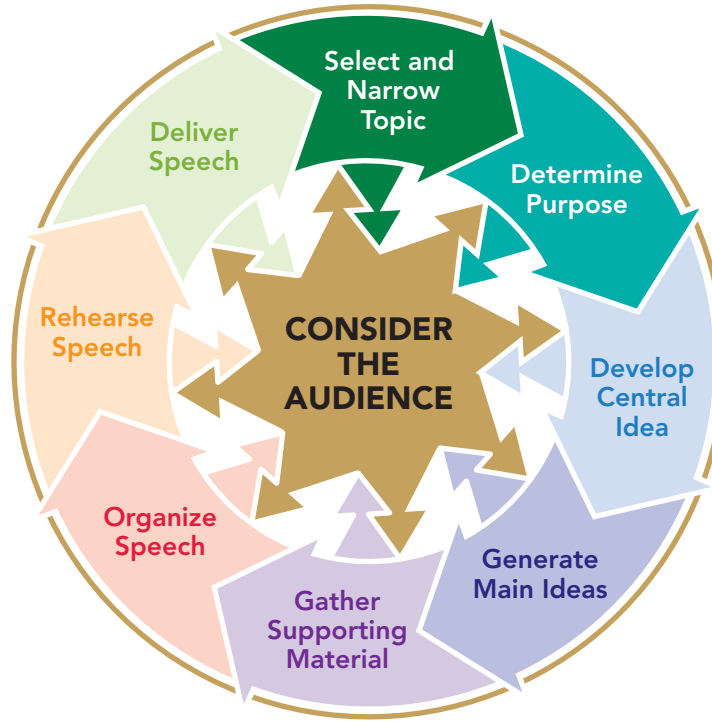

FIGURE 6.1 *Selecting and narrowing the topic and determining the general and specific purposes of the speech are early speechmaking tasks.*

you. For example, knowing that you visited England's Lake District on your tour of Great Britain last summer, your English literature teacher asks you to speak about the mountains and lakes of that region before your class studies the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Or knowing that you chair the local drug-abuse task force, the Lions Club asks you to speak at its weekly meeting about the work of your group. In both cases, your topic and its scope have been decided for you.

In other instances, the choice of topic may be left entirely to you. In your public-speaking class, your instructor may provide such guidelines as time limits and type of speech (informative, persuasive, or entertaining) but allow you to choose your topic. In this event, you should realize that the success of your speech may rest on your decision. But how do you go about choosing an appropriate, interesting topic?

Guidelines for Selecting a Topic

The late NBC political analyst and author Tim Russert, a popular speaker on college campuses, had delivered the same speech more than once. Finally, during a presentation at Harvard, students called his bluff:

> Equipped with cards listing pat phrases from past speeches, set out in a bingo-like format, they ticked off the passages as Mr. Russert spoke and then, having completed a row, shouted out "Bingo."[1]

Consider the Audience Russert's mistake was to rely on a standard spiel rather than tailoring his speeches to each specific audience. "What interests and needs do the members of this audience have in common?" and "Why did they ask me to speak?" are important questions to ask yourself as you search for potential speech topics. Keep in mind each audience's interests and expectations; for example, a university president who has been invited to speak to a civic organization should talk about some new university program or recent accomplishment; a police officer speaking to an elementary school's PTA should address the audience's concern for the safety of young children.

Not only should a speaker's choice of topic be relevant to the *interests* and *expectations* of his or her listeners; it should also take into account the *knowledge* listeners already have about the subject. For example, the need for a campuswide office of disability services would not be a good topic to discuss in a speech to a group of students with disabilities, who would already be well aware of such a need. The speech would offer them no new information.

Finally, speakers should choose topics that are *important*—topics that matter to their listeners as well as to themselves. Student speaker Roger Fringer explains the stakes for students in a public-speaking class:

> We work hard for our tuition, so we should spend it wisely. Spending it wisely means . . . we don't waste our classmates' time who have to listen to our speeches.[2]

Several years ago, communication scholar and then-president of the National Communication Association Bruce Gronbeck reminded an audience of communication instructors that students should be giving "the important kinds of . . . speeches that show . . . people how to confront the issues that divide them."[3] Table 6.1 offers examples of topics that are appropriate for the interests, expectations, knowledge, and concerns of particular audiences.

TABLE 6.1 *Sample Audience-Centered Topics*

Audience	Topic
Retirees	Preserving Social Security benefits
Civic organization	The Special Olympics
Church members	Starting a community food bank
First graders	What to do in case of a fire at home
Teachers	Building children's self-esteem
College fraternity	Campus service opportunities

Consider the Occasion On December 17, 1877, Mark Twain was invited to be one of the after-dinner speakers at American poet John Greenleaf Whittier's seventieth-birthday celebration.[4] The guest list included such dignitaries as Oliver Wendell Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Dean Howells, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. When it was Twain's turn to speak, he began with a burlesque in the style of *Saturday Night Live*, featuring Longfellow, Emerson, and Holmes as drunken card-playing travelers in Nevada. Used to laughter and applause from his audiences, Twain was stunned by the silence that descended and seemed to grow as he continued.

What had gone wrong? Was Mark Twain's topic of *interest* to his listeners? Undoubtedly. Did they *expect* to hear someone talk about the distinguished guests? Yes. Could Twain *add to their knowledge* of the subject? Probably. Was his topic *appropriate to the occasion*? Definitely not!

Although after-dinner speeches are usually humorous, Twain's irreverence was inappropriate to the dignity of this birthday observance. Even though he had considered his audience, he had not considered carefully enough the demands of the occasion. Twain's irreverent talk aroused quite a commotion at the time and is said to have embarrassed him for years afterward. To be successful, a topic must be appropriate to both audience and occasion.

Consider Yourself What do you talk about with your friends? You probably discuss school, mutual friends, political or social issues, hobbies or leisure activities, or whatever other topics are of interest and importance to you. Like most people, your liveliest, most animated conversations revolve around topics of personal concern that arouse your deepest convictions.

The best public-speaking topics are also those that reflect your personal experience or especially interest you. Where have you lived? Where have you traveled? Describe your family or your ancestors. Have you held any part-time jobs? Describe your first days at college. What are your favorite classes? What are your hobbies or interests? What is your favorite sport? What social issues especially concern you? Here is one list of topics that was generated by such questions:

Blues music

"Yankee, go home": the American tourist in France

Why most diets fail

Behind the counter at McDonald's

My first day at college

Maintaining family ties while living a long distance from home

Getting involved in political campaigns

An alternative to selecting a topic with which you are already familiar is to select one that you would like to know more about. Your interest will motivate both your research and your eventual delivery of the speech.

Strategies for Selecting a Topic

All successful topics reflect audience, occasion, and speaker. But just contemplating those guidelines does not automatically produce a good topic. Sooner or later, we all find ourselves unable to think of a good speech topic, whether it is for the first speech of the semester, that all-important final speech, or a speaking engagement long after your school years are over. Nothing is as frustrating to a public speaker as floundering for something to talk about!

Fortunately, there are several strategies that can help you to generate speech topics. They are somewhat more artificial than considering audience, occasion, and yourself to produce a "natural" topic choice. Nevertheless, they can yield good topics.

Brainstorming A problem-solving technique that is widely used in such diverse fields as business, advertising, writing, and science, **brainstorming** can easily be used to generate ideas for speech topics as well.[5] For example, the following list of twenty-one possible topics came from a brainstorming session that lasted about three minutes:

Music
Bob Marley
Retro music
Censorship of music
Oscar-winning movies of the 1950s
Titanic (the movie)
The Beatles
Alternative music
MTV
Key West, Florida
Polydactyl cats
Reggae
Sound-recording technology
Buddy Holly
Movie themes
Great epic movies
Salvaging the *Titanic* (the ship)
John Lennon
Popular rock bands
Treasure hunting
Ernest Hemingway

The How To box list gives you step-by-step instructions for brainstorming. If your brainstorming yields several good topics, so much the better. Set aside a page or two in your class notebook where you list topic ideas that you don't end up choosing. You can then reconsider them when you get your next assignment.

HOW TO

Brainstorm for a Topic

- Start with a blank sheet of paper.
- Set a time limit for brainstorming.
- Begin writing as many possible topics for a speech as you can.
- Do not stop to evaluate your topics; just write them down.
- Let one idea lead to another—free-associate; piggyback off your own ideas.
- Keep writing until your time is up.

Listening and Reading for Topic Ideas Very often, something you see, hear, or read triggers an idea for a speech. A current story on the evening news or in your local paper may suggest a topic. The following list of topics was brought to mind by recent headline stories in a large daily newspaper:

Deep-water drilling
Hate crimes
Federal benefits for same-sex couples
Coal mine safety
Mexican drug wars
Predicting volcanic activity
"Food fraud" and the FDA

In addition to discovering topics in news stories, you might find them in an interesting segment of *20/20, Dateline*, or even a daytime talk show. A topic that is covered in one medium probably has been covered in another as well, allowing extended research on the topic. For example, a talk show host's interview of the parents of a child suffering from a genetic disease may be paralleled by *Newsweek's* report on stem-cell research.

You may also find speech topics in one of your classes. One of the topics that we've mentioned so far might cause you to get an idea. You can also check the list of possible topic ideas in Appendix B of this book. Among your other courses, a lecture in an economics or political science class may arouse your interest and provide a good topic for your next speech. The instructor of that class could probably suggest additional references on the subject.

Sometimes even a subject that you discuss casually with friends can be developed into a good speech topic. You have probably talked with classmates about such campus issues as dormitory regulations, inadequate parking, or your frustration with registration and advisors. Campuswide concerns would be relevant to the student audience in your speech class, as would such matters as how to find a good summer job or the pros and cons of living on or off campus.

Just as you jotted down possible topics generated by brainstorming sessions, remember to write down topic ideas that you get from media, class lectures, and informal conversations. If you rely on memory alone, what seems like a great topic today may be only a frustrating blank tomorrow.

Scanning Web Directories By now, you probably have a list of topics from which to choose. But if all your efforts have failed to produce any ideas that satisfy you, try the following strategy:

Access a Web directory such as Yahoo! and select a category at random. Click on it, and look through the subcategories that come up. Click on one of them. Continue to follow the chain of categories until you see a topic that piques your interest—or until

you reach a dead end, in which case you can return to the Yahoo! homepage and try again.

A recent random directory search yielded the following category and subcategories, listed from general to specific:

Lifestyles
Green living
Carbon footprint calculator

This search took only a few minutes (as will yours, as long as you resist the temptation to begin surfing the Web) and yielded at least one possible topic: Calculating your carbon footprint. An additional advantage of this strategy is that you begin to develop your preliminary bibliography while you are searching for a topic.

QUICK CHECK

Selecting a Topic

Guidelines:

- Consider the audience.
- Consider the occasion.
- Consider yourself.

Strategies:

- Brainstorm.
- Listen and read.
- Scan Web directories.

Narrowing the Topic

After brainstorming, reading the newspaper, surfing the Web, and talking to friends, you have come up with a topic. For some students, the toughest part of the assignment is over at this point. But others soon experience additional frustration because their topic is so broad that they find themselves overwhelmed with information. How can you cover all aspects of a topic as large as "television" in three to five minutes? Even if you trained yourself to speak as rapidly as an auctioneer, it would take days to get it all in! The solution is to narrow your topic so that it fits within the time limits set by your assignment. The challenge lies in how to do this. The How To box describes a helpful method.

HOW TO

Narrow Your Topic

Try these two steps to narrow a broad, unmanageable topic:

1. *Create categories* Divide the topic, similar to the categories used in Web directories. First, write your general topic at the top of a list. Then add words to the list, making each added word a more specific or concrete topic. Here's an example:

   Music
   Folk music
   Irish folk music
   The popularity of Irish folk music in the United States

2. *Find the right level* Use the time limit of your speech to choose a topic from the correct spot on your list.

- *Not too broad:* If your topic is still a bit too broad—say, you simply cannot cover all the forms of Irish folk music that are popular in the United States during a five-minute talk—continue to add more categories to your list. In this example, you might choose one form of music—dance music—and talk about the kind of Irish hard-shoe dance music featured in *Riverdance*.
- *Not too narrow:* If you find that you've narrowed your topic too much that—so that you cannot find enough information for even a three-minute talk—just go back a step. In our example, you could return to the broader topic of the popularity of Irish folk music in the United States.

6.b Determine Your Purpose

Now that you have selected and narrowed your topic, you need to decide on a purpose (as shown in Figure 6.1). If you do not know what you want your speech to achieve, chances are your audience won't either. Ask yourself, "What is really important for the audience to hear?" and "How do I want the audience to respond?" Clarifying your objectives at this stage will ensure a more interesting speech and a more successful outcome.

General Purpose

The **general purpose**, or overarching goal, of virtually any speech is either to inform, to persuade, or to entertain. The speeches that you give in class will generally be either informative or persuasive. It is important that you fully understand what constitutes each type of speech so that you do not confuse them and fail to fulfill an assignment. You certainly do not want to deliver a first-rate persuasive speech when an informative one was assigned!

Speaking to Inform An informative speaker is a teacher. Informative speakers give listeners information. They define, describe, or explain a thing, person, place, concept, process, or function. In this excerpt from a student's informative speech on anorexia nervosa, the student describes the disorder for her audience:

> Anorexia nervosa is an eating disorder that affects 1 out of every 200 American women. It is a self-induced starvation that can waste its victims to the point that they resemble victims of Nazi concentration camps.
>
> Who gets anorexia nervosa? Ninety-five percent of its victims are females between the ages of 12 and 18. Men are only rarely afflicted with the disease. Anorexia nervosa patients are usually profiled as "good" or "model" children who have not caused their parents any undue concern or grief over other behavior problems. Anorexia nervosa is perhaps a desperate bid for attention by these young women.[6]

Most lectures that you hear in college are informative. The university president's annual "state of the university" speech is also informative, as is the tour guide's talk at Colonial Williamsburg. Such speakers are all trying to increase their listeners' knowledge. Although they may use an occasional bit of humor in their presentations, their main objective is not to entertain. And although they may provoke an audience's interest in the topic, their main objective is not to persuade.

Speaking to Persuade Persuasive speakers may offer information, but they use the information to try to change or reinforce an audience's convictions and often to urge some sort of action. For example, Brian offered compelling statistics to help persuade his audience to take steps to prevent and alleviate chronic pain:

> A hundred million Americans, nearly a third of the population, [suffer] from chronic pain due to everything from accidents to the simple daily stresses on our bodies.[7]

The representative from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) who spoke at your high-school assembly urged you not to drink and drive and to help others realize the inherent dangers of the practice. The fraternity president talking to your group of rushees tried to convince you to join his fraternity. Appearing on television during the last election, the candidates for President of the United States asked for your vote. All these speakers gave you information, but they used that information to try to get you to believe or do something.

Speaking to Entertain The entertaining speaker tries to get the members of an audience to relax, smile, perhaps laugh, and generally enjoy themselves. Storyteller Garrison Keillor spins tales of the town and residents of Lake Wobegon, Minnesota, to amuse his listeners. Comedian Dane Cook delivers comic patter to make his audience laugh. Most after-dinner speakers talk to entertain the banquet guests. Like persuasive speakers, entertaining speakers may inform their listeners, but providing knowledge is not their main goal. Rather, their objective is to produce at least a smile and at best a belly laugh.

Early on, you need to decide which of the three general purposes your speech is to have. This decision keeps you on track throughout the development of your speech.

The way in which you organize, support, and deliver your speech depends, in part, on your general purpose.

QUICK CHECK

General Purposes for Speeches

To inform: To share information with listeners by defining, describing, or explaining a thing, person, place, concept, process, or function

To persuade: To change or reinforce a listener's attitude, belief, value, or behavior

To entertain: To help listeners have a good time by getting them to relax, smile, and laugh

Specific Purpose

Now that you have a topic and you know generally whether your speech should inform, persuade, or entertain, it is time you decided on its **specific purpose**, the concise statement of what you want your listeners to know, feel or be able to do when you finish speaking. Unlike the general purpose, which can be assigned by your instructor, the specific purpose of your speech must be decided on by you alone, because it depends directly on the topic you choose.

Identify a Behavioral Objective To arrive at a specific purpose for your speech, you must think in precise terms of what you want your audience to be able to do at the end of your speech. This kind of goal or purpose is called a **behavioral objective**, because you specify the behavior you seek from the audience.

The How To box offers a formula you can use to put together your specific-purpose statement. You can apply the same formula to help you prepare a speech with any general purpose. For a speech on how television comedy represents the modern family, you might write, "At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to explain how comedy portrays American family life today." The specific-purpose statement for a how-to speech doing scholarly research might read, "At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to use an online periodical index." For a persuasive speech on universal health care, your specific-purpose statement could say, "At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to explain why the United States should adopt a plan of national health insurance." A speech to entertain has a specific purpose, too. A stand-up comic may have a simple specific purpose: "At the end of my speech, the audience will laugh and applaud." An after-dinner speaker whose entertaining message has more informative value than that of the stand-up comic might say, "At the end of my speech, the audience will list four characteristics that distinguish journalists from the rest of the human species."

HOW TO

Formulate Your Specific Purpose Statement

1. *Start with standard wording.* Almost all specific-purpose statements begin with the same twelve words: "At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to. . . ."
2. *Then add a verb.* The next word in your statement should be a verb that names an observable, measurable action that the audience should be able to take by the end of the speech.
   - *DO* use verbs such as *list, explain, describe,* or *write.*
   - *DON'T* use words such as *know, understand,* or *believe.* You can discover what your listeners know, understand, or believe only by having them *show* their increased capability in some measurable way.
3. *Finish with details.* The last part of your statement should give details that explain the action you want your listeners to do. The details reflect the topic of your speech. They often provide the answer to "w" questions you may have learned as a child: *who, what, where, when,* and so on. For example, the statement "At the end of my speech the audience will be able to wash any size car by themselves at home" gives details about *where* and with *whom* listeners will be able to wash *which* car.

Characteristics of a Specific Purpose Note that a statement of purpose does not say what you, the *speaker*, will do. The techniques of public speaking help you to achieve your goals, but they are not themselves goals. To say, "In my speech, I will talk about the benefits of studying classical dance" emphasizes your performance as a speaker. This goal statement is centered on you rather than on the audience. Other than restating your topic, this statement of purpose provides little direction for the speech. But to say, "At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to list three ways in which studying classical dance can benefit them" places the audience and their behavior at the center of your concern. This latter statement provides a tangible goal that can guide your preparation and by which you can measure the success of your speech.

The following guidelines will also help you to prepare your statement of purpose:

- *Use words that refer to observable or measurable behavior.*

  Not observable: At the end of my speech, the audience will know some things about Hannibal, Missouri.

  Observable: At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to list five points of interest in the town of Hannibal, Missouri.
- *Limit the specific purpose to a single idea.* If your statement of purpose has more than one idea, you will have trouble covering the extra ideas in your speech. You will also run the risk of having your speech "come apart at the seams." Both unity of ideas and coherence of expression will suffer.

Two ideas: At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to write a simple computer program in BASIC and play the video game God of War III.

One idea: At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to write a simple computer program in BASIC.

- *Make sure your specific purpose reflects the interests, expectations, and knowledge level of your audience.* Also be sure that your specific purpose is important. Earlier in this chapter, we discussed these criteria as guidelines for selecting a speech topic. Consider them again as you word your specific-purpose statement.

Behavioral statements of purpose help to remind you that the aim of public speaking is to win a response from the audience. In addition, using a specific purpose to guide the development of your speech helps you to focus on the audience during the entire preparation process.

Using the Specific Purpose Everything you do while preparing and delivering the speech should contribute to your specific purpose. The specific purpose can help you to assess the information you are gathering for your speech. For example, you may find that an interesting statistic, although related to your topic, does not help to achieve your specific purpose. In that case, you can substitute material that directly advances your purpose.

As soon as you have decided on it, write the specific purpose on a three- by five-inch note card. Then refer to it as often as necessary while developing your speech.

6.c Develop Your Central Idea

Having stated the specific purpose of your speech, you are ready to develop your central idea, the first step highlighted in Figure 6.2. The **central idea** (sometimes called the *thesis*) is a one-sentence summary of the speech. As summarized in Table 6.2, a central idea differs from a purpose statement in both focus and application. A purpose

TABLE 6.2 *Purpose Statement versus Central Idea*

The Purpose Statement	The Central Idea
Indicates what the audience should be able to do by the end of the speech	Summarizes the speech in one sentence
Guides the speaker's choices throughout the preparation of the speech	Is stated in the speech
	The Central Idea Should . . . • Be a complete declarative sentence • Use direct, specific language • Be a single idea • Be an audience-centered idea

statement focuses on audience behavior, the central idea focuses on the content of the speech. A purpose statement guides your decisions as you prepare the speech; the central idea becomes part of your final speech.

Professional speech coach Judith Humphrey explains the importance of a central idea:

> Ask yourself before writing a speech . . . "What's my point?" Be able to state that message in a single clear sentence. Everything else you say will support that single argument.[8]

The guidelines in the following sections can help you to put your central idea into words.

A Complete Declarative Sentence

The central idea should be a complete declarative sentence—not a phrase or clause and not a question.

Phrase:	Car maintenance
Question:	Is regular car maintenance important?
Complete declarative sentence:	Maintaining your car regularly can ensure that it provides reliable transportation.

The phrase *car maintenance* is really not a central idea, but a topic. It does not say anything about car maintenance. The question "Is regular car maintenance important?" is more complete but does not reveal whether the speaker is going to support the affirmative or the negative answer. By the time you word your central idea, you should be ready to summarize your stand on your topic in a complete declarative sentence.

Direct, Specific Language

The central idea should use direct, specific language rather than qualifiers and vague generalities.

Qualified language:	In my opinion, censorship of school textbooks threatens the rights of schoolchildren.
Direct language:	Censorship of school textbooks threatens the rights of schoolchildren.
Vague language:	A March 2011 earthquake affected Japan.
Specific language:	The magnitude 9.0 earthquake that struck off the east coast of Northern Japan in March 2011 killed more than 18,000 people and left hundreds of thousands more homeless.

A Single Idea

The central idea should be a single idea.

Two ideas:	Deforestation by lumber interests and toxic-waste dumping are major environmental problems in the United States today.

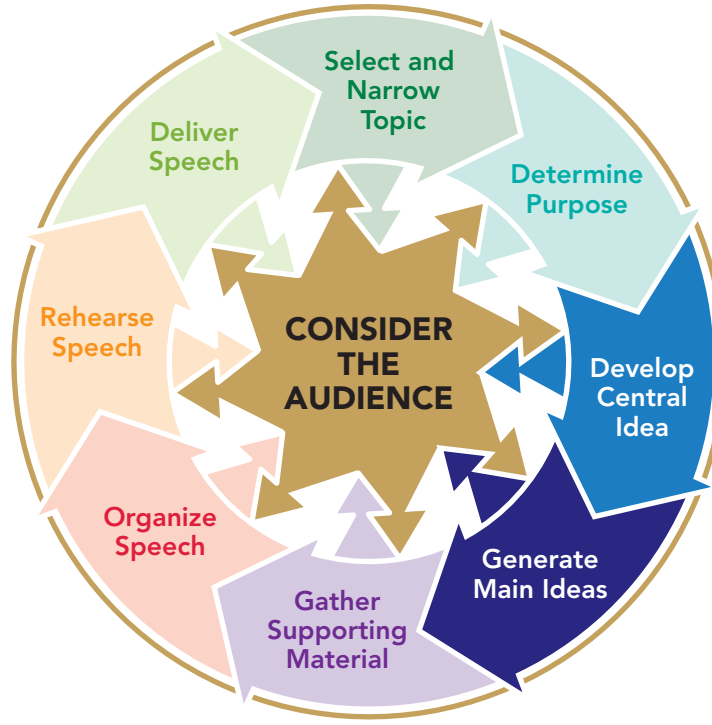

FIGURE 6.2 *State your central idea as a one-sentence summary of your speech, and then generate main ideas by looking for natural divisions, reasons, or steps to support your central idea.*

One idea: Toxic-waste dumping is a major environmental problem in the United States today.

More than one central idea, like more than one idea in a purpose statement, only leads to confusion and lack of coherence in a speech.

An Audience-Centered Idea

The central idea should reflect consideration of the audience. You considered your audience when selecting and narrowing your topic and when composing your purpose statement. In the same way, you should consider your audience's needs, interests, expectations, and knowledge when stating your central idea. If you do not consider your listeners, you run the risk of losing their attention before you even begin developing the speech. If your audience consists mainly of college juniors and seniors, the second of the following central ideas would be better suited to your listeners than the first.

Inappropriate: Scholarships from a variety of sources are readily available to first-year college students.

Appropriate: Although you might think of scholarships as a source of money for freshmen, a number of scholarships are available only to students who have completed their first year of college.

6.d Generate and Preview Your Main Ideas

In the words of columnist H. V. Prochnow, "A good many people can make a speech, but saying something is more difficult." Effective speakers are good thinkers; they say something. They know how to play with words and thoughts to develop their main ideas. The ancient Romans called this skill **invention**—the ability to develop or discover ideas that result in new insights or new approaches to old problems. The Roman orator Cicero called this aspect of speaking the process of "finding out what [a speaker] should say."

Generating Your Main Ideas

Next to selecting a topic, probably the most common stumbling block in developing speeches is coming up with a speech plan. Trying to decide how to subdivide your central idea into two, three, or four key points, or **main ideas**, can make you chew your pencil, scratch your head, and end up as you began—with a blank sheet of paper. The task will be much easier if you use the three-question strategy described in the How To box. Let's see this technique at work with several central idea statements.

HOW TO

Determine Your Main Ideas

1. Write your central idea at the top of a sheet of paper.
2. Ask yourself the following three questions. You should be able to answer *yes* to one or more of these questions:
   - *Does the central idea have logical divisions?* These may be indicated by such phrases as "three types" or "four means."
   - *Are there several reasons why the central idea is true?*
   - *Can I support the central idea with a series of steps or a chronological progression?*
3. Write down the divisions, reasons, or steps you thought of. These will become the main ideas of your speech.

Finding Logical Divisions Suppose your central idea is "A liberal arts education benefits the student in three ways." You now turn to the three questions. But for this example, you needn't go beyond the first one. Does the central idea have logical divisions? The phrase "three ways" indicates that it does. You can logically divide your speech into ways in which the student benefits:

1. Job opportunities
2. Appreciation of culture
3. Concern for humankind

A brief brainstorming session then could help you to come up with more specific examples of ways in which a liberal arts education might benefit students.

At this stage, you needn't worry about Roman numerals, parallel form, or even the order in which the main ideas are listed. We will discuss these and other features of outlining in Chapter 11. Your goal now is simply to generate ideas.

Just because you write them down, don't think that the ideas you come up with now are engraved in stone. They can—and probably will—change. After all, this is a preliminary plan. It may undergo many revisions before you actually deliver your speech. In our example, three points might well prove to be too many to develop in the brief time allowed for most classroom speeches. But it is much easier to eliminate ideas than to invent them, so list them all for now.

Establishing Reasons Suppose your central idea is "Upholstered furniture fires are a life-threatening hazard."[9] Asking yourself whether this idea has logical divisions is no help at all. There are no key phrases indicating logical divisions—no "ways," "means," "types," or "methods" appear in the wording. The second question, however, is more productive: Having done some initial reading on the topic, you can think of reasons this central idea is true. Asking yourself "Why?" after stating your central idea yields three answers:

1. Standards to reduce fires caused by smoldering cigarettes have lulled furniture makers into a false sense of security.
2. Government officials refuse to force the furniture industry to reexamine its standards.
3. Consumers are largely ignorant of the risks.

Notice that these main ideas are expressed in complete sentences, whereas the ones in the preceding example were in phrases. At this stage, it doesn't matter. What does matter is getting your ideas down on paper. You can rewrite and reorganize them later.

Tracing Specific Steps "NASA's space shuttle program has known both great achievement and tragic failure." You stare glumly at the central idea that you so carefully formulated yesterday. Now what? You know a lot about the subject; your aerospace science professor has covered it thoroughly this semester. But how can you organize all the information you have? Again, you turn to the three-question method.

Does the main idea have logical divisions? You scan the sentence hopefully, but you can find no key phrases suggesting logical divisions.

Can you think of several reasons the central idea is true? You read the central idea again and ask "Why?" at the end of it. Answering that question may indeed produce a plan for a speech, one in which you would talk about the reasons for the achievements and failures. But your purpose statement reads, "At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to trace the history of the space shuttle." Giving reasons for the space shuttle program's achievements and failures would not directly contribute to your purpose. So you turn to the third question.

Can you support your central idea with a series of steps? Almost any historical topic or any topic requiring a chronological progression (for example, topics of how-to speeches) can be subdivided by answering the third question. You therefore decide that your main ideas will be a chronology of important space shuttle flights: [10]

1. April 1981: Test flight of the space shuttle.
2. January 1986: Shuttle Challenger explodes on launch.
3. April 1990: Deployment of the Hubble space telescope.
4. October–November 1998: Flight of John Glenn, age 77, who had been the first American in orbit in 1962.
5. May–June 1999: Shuttle Discovery docks with the International Space Station
6. February 2003: Shuttle Columbia disintegrates on re-entry.
7. April 2011: Shuttle *Endeavour* scheduled for fleet's final launch.

You know that you can add to, eliminate, or reorganize these ideas later. But you have a start.

Notice that for this last example, you consulted your purpose statement as you generated your main ideas. If these main ideas do not help you to achieve your purpose, you need to rethink your speech. You may finally change either your purpose or your main ideas; but whichever you do, you need to synchronize them. Remember, it is much easier to make changes at this point than after you have done your research and produced a detailed outline.

Previewing Your Main Ideas

Once you have generated your main ideas, you can add a preview of those main ideas to your central idea to produce a **blueprint** for your speech. Preview the ideas in the same order in which you plan to discuss them in the speech.

Some speakers, like Nicole, integrate their central idea and preview into one blueprint sentence:

> Obsolete computers are straining landfills because they contain hazardous materials and take a distinctively long time to decay.[11]

In this example, Nicole started with a central idea: "Obsolete computers are straining landfills." Asking herself "Why?" yielded two reasons, which became her

two main points: "They contain hazardous materials" and "They take a distinctively long time to decay." Combining these reasons with her central idea produced a blueprint.

Other speakers, like Erin, state their blueprints in several sentences:

> Today I would like to expose the myth that owning a gun guarantees your personal safety. First, I will discuss the fact that guns are rarely reached in time of need. Then I will address the risk of accidental shootings and how this is greatly increased by people's failure to receive proper gun-handling training. And finally, I will propose an alternative solution, self-defense.[12]

Erin also started with a central idea: "Owning a gun does not guarantee your personal safety." Like Nicole, she generated reasons for her central idea, which in this case were that "guns are rarely reached in time of need" and that "the risk of accidental shootings is increased." She decided also to discuss martial-arts "self-defense" as a solution to the problem. Thinking that a single sentence might become unwieldy, Erin decided to use four shorter sentences for her blueprint.

6.e Meanwhile, Back at the Computer . . .

It's been a while since we left Ed Garcia, the student in the opening paragraphs of this chapter, struggling to write a speech on college football. Even though he has procrastinated, if he follows the steps we have discussed, he should still be able to plan a successful informative speech.

Ed has already chosen his topic. His audience is likely to be interested in his subject. Because Ed is a varsity defensive tackle, the audience will probably expect him to talk about college football. And he himself is passionately interested in and knowledgeable about the subject. It meets all the requirements of a successful topic.

But the topic "college football" is too broad for a three- to five-minute talk. Ed needs to narrow his topic to a manageable size. He goes online to Yahoo! and clicks on the category Sports. This search yields a fairly long list of subcategories. He is just about to select College and University when another category catches his eye: Medicine. Sports medicine? Hmmmm. . . . Ed has suffered several injuries and feels qualified to talk about this aspect of football. Ed doesn't need to go further. He has his topic: "Injuries in college football."

Now that he has narrowed the topic, Ed needs a purpose statement. He decides that his audience might know something about how players are injured, but they probably do not know how these injuries are treated. He types, "The audience will be able to explain how the three most common injuries suffered by college football players are treated."

A few minutes later, Ed derives his central idea from his purpose: "Sports medicine specialists have developed specific courses of treatment for the three most common kinds of injuries suffered by college football players."

Generating main ideas is also fairly easy now. Because his central idea mentions three kinds of injuries, he can plan his speech around those three ideas (logical divisions). Under the central idea Ed lists three injuries:

1. Bruises
2. Broken bones
3. Ligament and cartilage damage

Now Ed has a plan and is well on his way to developing a successful three- to five-minute informative speech.

STUDY GUIDE

Remember These Main Ideas

- The four main steps in getting from a blank piece of paper to a speech plan are to (1) select and narrow your topic, (2) determine your purpose, (3) develop your central idea, and (4) generate and preview your main ideas.
- Selecting a topic may or may not be difficult, depending on the requirements of the speech. You may be asked to address a specific topic, or you may be given only broad guidelines, such as a time limit and an idea of the occasion.
- When selecting a topic, consider the audience, the occasion, and yourself.
- The topic should be relevant to the needs, interests, and expectations of the audience and should take into account the knowledge listeners already have about the subject.
- The topic must be appropriate to both the audience and the occasion and should reflect your personal experience or what especially interests you.
- To generate speech topics, brainstorm, listen and read for topic ideas, or access a Web directory such as Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com).
- Narrow the topic to fit within the time limits by creating categories and finding enough information.
- The general purpose of virtually any speech is either to inform (give listeners information), to persuade (try to change or reinforce an audience's convictions and urge them to some sort of action), or to entertain (to get the audience to relax, smile, laugh, and enjoy themselves).
- To arrive at a specific purpose for your speech, think in precise terms of what you want your audience to be able to do at the end of your speech. Identify a behavioral objective by specifying the behavior you seek from the audience.
- Because a specific-purpose statement indicates what you hope to accomplish, it serves as a yardstick by which you can measure the relevance of ideas and supporting materials while developing the speech.
- Your central idea should be a one-sentence summary of your speech that can be expressed in a complete declarative sentence.
- The central idea should be a single idea and should reflect consideration of the audience.
- To generate main ideas, determine whether the central idea has logical divisions, can be supported by several reasons, or can be traced through a series of steps.
- Create a blueprint for your speech by combining the central idea and a preview of the main ideas. You will probably include your blueprint, or preview, in the introduction and summarize it in the conclusion of your speech.

Understand These Key Terms

behavioral objective (p. 127)
blueprint (p. 134)
brainstorming (p. 122)
central idea (p. 129)
general purpose (p. 125)
invention (p. 132)
main ideas (p. 132)
specific purpose (p. 127)

Think about These Questions

- A candidate for governor visits your public-speaking class and talks for thirty minutes on the topic "Why the state should increase funding of public transportation." Analyze the candidate's choice of topic according to the guidelines presented in this chapter.
- At lunch, you overhear a stranger at the next table mention a book that she used as a key reference for a political science paper she wrote. Would it be ethical for you to borrow her topic and consult the book she mentioned to prepare a speech for a public-speaking course? Why or why not?
- Consider the following specific-purpose statements. Analyze each according to the criteria presented in this chapter. Rewrite the statements to correct any problems.

  "At the end of my speech, the audience will know more about the Mexican Free-Tailed Bat."

  "I will explain some differences between Asian and Western cultures in nonverbal communication."

  "At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to list some reasons for xeriscaping one's yard."

  "The advantages and disadvantages of living in a college dormitory."

  "At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to prepare a realistic monthly budget."

- Below are the topic, general purpose, and specific purpose that Marylin has chosen for her speech. Use the advice in this chapter to write an appropriate central idea and main ideas for the speech.

  Topic: America's crumbling roads and bridges

  General purpose: To persuade

  Specific purpose: At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to list and explain three reasons America should invest in its roads and bridges.

Learn More Online

Idea Generator Try this roulette-wheel style method of generating ideas. Click in the center of the wheel to get a random combination of three words. See whether any of them spark a topic brainstorm for you.
http://www.tdbspecialprojects.com/#169515/Idea-Generator

How to Narrow a Speech Topic This is part of a series of instructions from the how-to web site eHow.
http://www.ehow.com/how_2290282_narrow-speech-topic.html

Determining the Purpose of Your Speech This quick tutorial provides more help in developing your statement of your purpose for speaking.
http://www.wisc-online.com/objects/ViewObject.aspx?ID=SPH2901

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Gathering and Using Supporting Material

7

"Learn, compare, collect the facts! ... Always have the courage to say to yourself— I am ignorant."

—Ivan Petrovich Pavlov

OUTLINE

7.a Sources of Supporting Material
- Personal Knowledge and Experience
- The Internet
- Online Databases
- Traditional Library Holdings
- Interviews

7.b Research Strategies
- Develop a Preliminary Biography
- Locate Resources
- Assess the Usefulness of Resources
- Take Notes
- Identify Possible Presentation Aids

7.c Types of Supporting Material
- Illustrations
- Descriptions and Explanations
- Definitions
- Analogies
- Statistics
- Opinions

7.d The Best Supporting Material

Apple pie is your specialty. Your family and friends relish your flaky crust, spicy filling, and crunchy crumb topping. Fortunately, not only do you have a never-fail recipe and technique, but you also know where to go for the best ingredients. Fette's Orchard has the tangiest pie apples in town. For your crust, you use only Premier shortening, which you buy at Meyer's Specialty Market. Your crumb topping requires both stone-ground whole-wheat flour and fresh creamery butter, available on Tuesdays at the farmer's market on the courthouse square.

Just as making your apple pie requires that you know where to find specific ingredients, creating a successful speech requires knowledge of sources, research strategies, and types of supporting material that speechmakers typically use. As Figure 7.1 illustrates, gathering supporting material is a key step in the crafting of any speech. In this chapter, we will identify various sources of information and discuss ways to access them. Then we will focus on recognizing and effectively using various types of supporting material.

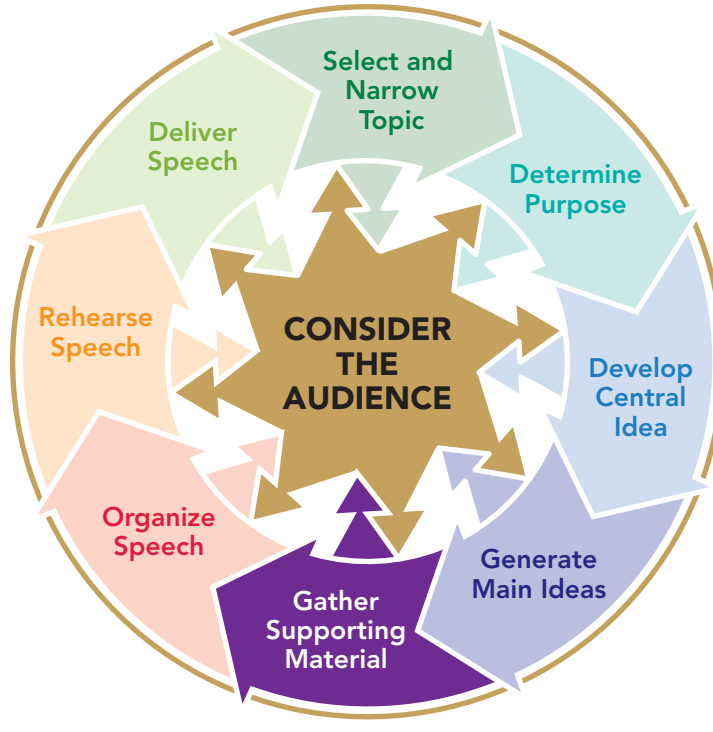


FIGURE 7.1 *Finding, identifying, and effectively using supporting material are activities that comprise an essential step of the speech-preparation process.*

7.a Sources of Supporting Material

Personal Knowledge and Experience

Because you will probably give speeches on topics in which you are particularly interested, you may find that you are your own best source. Your speech may be on a skill or hobby about which you are knowledgeable, such as raising tropical fish, stenciling, or stamp collecting. Or you might talk on a subject with which you have had some personal experience, such as buying a used car, deciding whether to join a club, or seeking assisted living for an elderly relative.

It is true that most well-researched speeches include some objective material gathered from outside sources. But you may also be able to provide an effective illustration, explanation, definition, or other type of support from your own knowledge and experience. As an audience-centered speaker, you should realize, too, that personal knowledge often has the additional advantage of heightening your credibility in the minds of your listeners. They will accord you more respect as an authority when they realize that you have firsthand knowledge of a topic.

The Internet

In the decades since its inception, the **Internet**, the vast collection of hundreds of thousands of computers accessible to millions of people around the world, has gone from a novel, last-resort resource to the first place most people turn when faced with a research task. Understanding the Internet's primary delivery system—the **World Wide Web**—the tools for accessing it, and some of the amazing types of information available can help to make your research more productive.

Locating Internet Resources You have probably accessed material on the Web with Google or Yahoo!, both of which offer directory and search engine capabilities. If you feel overwhelmed by the number of sites these general search tools yield, a specialized **vertical search engine**, a Web site that indexes World Wide Web information in a specific field, can help you to narrow your search. For example, Google Scholar indexes academic sources, and Indeed indexes job Web sites.

Another strategy that can help you to narrow your search is a **Boolean search**, which allows you to enclose phrases in quotation marks or parentheses so that a search yields only those sites on which all words of the phrase appear in that order, rather than sites that contain the words at random. Boolean searches also permit you to insert "AND" or "+" between words and phrases to indicate that you wish to see results that contain both phrases; similarly, they let you exclude certain words and phrases from your search. They also let you restrict the dates of your hits so that you see only documents posted within a specified time frame. These relatively simple strategies can help you to narrow a list of hits from, in some cases, millions of sites to a more workable number.

Types of Internet Resources As you go to the Web sites you have located, you will probably find a wide variety—from sites that try to sell you something to the official sites of government agencies and news organizations. One clue to the type of site you have found is the *domain*, indicated by the last three letters of the site's URL (for example, .com or .org).

Although sites can be classified in a number of different ways, most Web sites fall into one of the following six categories.[1]

- *Advocacy site.* Nonprofit organizations sponsor Web sites to influence public opinion and/or promote their causes. The often use the domain *.org*.
- *Commercial site.* Today, almost all companies that are in business to promote or sell a product have a Web site; some sell exclusively online. They usually use the domain *.com* or, less often, *.net*.
- *Entertainment site.* Sites that are intended primarily to entertain are often interactive and sometimes require users to download specialized audio, video, and/or gaming software. Like commercial sites, entertainment sites usually use the domain *.com*.
- *Information site.* These sites usually present facts and statistics on academic, scientific, or social scientific topics. Reflecting their sponsorship by educational institutions, government entities, or the military, information sites usually use the domains *.edu, .gov,* and *.mil*.
- *News site.* News sits are often online versions of newspapers or news reports delivered via other media, but they have the advantage of being able to provide up-to-the-minute information. News sites usually use the domain *.com*.
- *Personal site.* Personal sites are usually pages posted to other sites, such as Facebook or popular blog sites. They may include chat rooms or discussion forums. Their domain will reflect the site to which they are posted.

Evaluating Web Resources Although the existence of the Web is a great victory for those who support free speech, the lack of legal, financial, or editorial restrictions on what is published presents both a logistical and an ethical challenge to researchers.

As you begin to explore the sites that you discover, you need to evaluate them according to a consistent standard. The six criteria in Table 7.1 can serve as such a standard.[2] The first four of the criteria can serve as guides to evaluating any resource, regardless of whether it is a Web site, a print document, or even information that you obtain in an interview. Later in this chapter, we provide additional criteria to help you make your final selection of supporting material from both electronic and print resources.

Online Databases

Online databases provide access to bibliographic information, abstracts, and full texts for a variety of resources, including periodicals, newspapers, government documents,

TABLE 7.1 *Six Criteria for Evaluating Internet Resources*

Accountability: Who is responsible for the site?	• Check "Sponsored Links" (Google) or "Sponsored Results" (Yahoo!) to determine the individual or organization responsible for the site. • Look to see whether or not the page is signed. • Follow hyperlinks or do a search on the author's name to determine the author's expertise and authority. • If the Web site is unsigned, search for a sponsoring organization. Follow hyperlinks, do a search on the organization's name, or consider the domain to determine the reputability.	If you have tried these strategies and still cannot identify or verify the author or sponsor of a Web site, be extremely wary of the site
Accuracy: Is the information correct?	• Consider whether or not the author or sponsor is a credible authority. • Assess the care with which the site has been written. • Conduct additional research into the information you find on the site.	• If the author or sponsor is a credible authority, the information is more likely to be accurate. • A site should be relatively free of writing errors. • You may be able to verify or refute the information by consulting another resource.
Objectivity: Is the site free of bias?	• Consider the interests, philosophical or political biases, and source of financial support of the author and/or sponsor of the site. • Does the site include advertisements that might influence its content?	• The more objective the author and sponsor of the site are, the more credible their information may be.
Timeliness: Is the site current?	• Look at the bottom of the site for a statement telling when the site was posted and when it was last updated. • If you cannot find a date on the site, click on Page Info (from the View menu at the top of your browser screen) to find a "Last Modified" date. • Enter the title of the site in a search engine. The resulting information should include a date.	• In general, when you are concerned with factual data, the more recent the site is, the better.
Usability: Do the layout and design of the site facilitate its use?	• Does the site load fairly quickly? • Is a fee required to gain access to any of the information on the site?	• Balance graphics and any fees against practical efficiency.

(*continued*)

(*continued*)

Diversity: Is the site inclusive?	• Do language and graphics reflect and respect differences in gender, ethnicity, race, and sexual orientation? • Do interactive forums invite divergent perspectives? • Is the site friendly to people with disabilities (e.g., does it offer a large-print or video option)?	• A site should be free of bias, representative of diverse perspectives, and accessible by people with disabilities.

and even books. Like Web sites, online databases are reached via a networked computer. However, most databases are restricted to patrons of libraries that subscribe to them. The How To box tells you how to locate and search most online databases.

HOW TO

Find and Use Online Databases

- *Go to your library's homepage, and log in with your username and password.*
- *Determine the available databases.* Look around the library's Web site. Research resources, including databases, are often available via a tab or link. Databases are usually listed according to type and/or subjects, as well as alphabetically.
- *Search the database.* After you pick the database that is best suited to your needs, searching is relatively simple. Each database opens with a search box, into which you type relevant information such as keywords and date ranges. Most also allow Boolean and other types of advanced searches.
- *Multiply your search.* In some cases, you may be able to search more than one database at a time by searching providers that offer access to multiple databases. ProQuest, for example, provides databases of alternative newspapers, criminal justice periodicals, doctoral dissertations, and education journals as well as its popular *ABI/INFORM Global* database of business and finance publications.

Many online databases that began as computerized indexes now provide access to full texts of the resources themselves. Your library may subscribe to several or all of the popular full-text databases:

- *ABA/Inform Global.* This resource offers many full-text articles in business and trade publications from 1971 to the present.
- *Academic Search Complete.* This popular database offers many full-text articles from 1865 to the present, covering a wide variety of subjects.
- *JSTOR.* This is a multi-subject, full-text database of journal articles from the first volume to the present.
- *LexisNexis Academic.* Focusing on business, industry, and law, this database provides many full-text articles from newspapers, magazines, journals, newsletters, and wire services. Dates of coverage vary.

Traditional Library Holdings

Despite the rapid development of the Internet and database resources, the more traditional holdings of libraries, both paper and electronic, remain rich sources of supporting material.

Locating Traditional Library Holdings

Spend some time becoming familiar with your library's layout and services so that you know how to access books, periodicals, newspapers, and reference materials.

- *Locating books through the card catalog.* You can probably access your library's computerized **card catalog**, a file of information about the books in a library, from your own computer before you ever enter the library. As in the example in Figure 7.2, the catalog will supply each book's *call number*, which you will need in order to find the book.

FIGURE 7.2 *An Entry from a Computerized Card Catalog. The same entry appears on the screen regardless of whether the book is accessed using title, author, or subject.*
Source: Computerized library catalog from Albert B. Alkek Library, Texas State University-San Marcos. Copyright 2011 by Texas State University. Reprinted by permission.

FIGURE 7.3 *A Typical Subject Entry from The* Reader's Guide. *A key to abbreviations can be found in each volume.*
Source: "H. W. Wilson Reader's Guide." Copyright 2011 EBSCO Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.

- *Locating periodicals through periodical indexes.* The term *periodical* refers to both general-interest magazines, such as *Newsweek* and *Consumer Reports*, and academic and professional journals, such as *Communication Monographs* and *American Psychologist*. Just as a card catalog can help you to find books, a **periodical index**, a listing of bibliographical data for articles published in a group of magazines and/or journals during a given time period, can help you to locate articles that might be useful. Formatted for many years as large bound volumes, most periodical indexes today are provided via databases. Some of the best-known include the *Readers' Guide* (see Figure 7.3) and the *Public Affairs Information Service*.
- *Locating newspapers through newspaper indexes.* Newspaper databases such as *Newspaper Source* not only index selected articles from newspapers and transcripts from news organizations, but also provide full texts of the articles. As with periodicals, you can use keyword searches to locate newspaper articles. If you know the date on which an event occurred, however, you can simply locate a newspaper from that or the following day and probably find a news story on the event.

- *Locating reference resources online and through the card catalog.* Many encyclopedias, dictionaries, directories, atlases, almanacs, yearbooks, books of quotations, and biographical dictionaries are now available on the Internet. But if you cannot find a specific reference resource online, you may be able to locate a print version by using your library's card catalog. No discussion of encyclopedias would be complete without mentioning *Wikipedia*, the resource that often comes up as the first hit on a Web search. *Wikipedia* can be useful, especially for general information about current events and new technology that might not find its way into print encyclopedias for years. But users need to keep in mind that anyone, regardless of expertise, can add to or change the content of any entry, thereby limiting *Wikipedia's* reliability and its appropriateness for academic use.

Exploring Traditional Library Holdings Although a wealth of supporting material is available online, you might still need to go to the library to find books and some articles and reference resources. It is a good idea to become familiar with your library's layout before you have to do research under the pressure of a deadline.

- *Books.* Libraries' collections of books are called the **stacks**. The stacks are organized by call numbers, which are available on card-catalog entries. Many libraries offer a location guide or map to guide you to the floor or section of the stacks that houses the books with the call numbers in which you are interested.
- *Periodicals.* Although full texts of many magazine and journal articles are provided by databases, some publishers do not make their most recent issues available online. So finding a current article might require a trip to the library. Most periodicals are housed in a section of the library dedicated to periodicals, where bound volumes of past issues and single copies of current issues are arranged by call number. Some may be available on microfilm. Don't let microfilm intimidate you. Microfilm readers are easy to use, and most librarians or aides will be glad to show you how to set up the reader with the film you need.
- *Newspapers.* Like periodicals, most newspapers are available in databases, but the library might be the only place you can find local papers, yesterday's or today's papers, or very old editions (if you are looking for articles about a historical event). Most of a library's back newspaper holdings will likely be on microfilm.
- *Reference resources.* Printed reference resources are indexed in a library's card catalog. Their call numbers will have the prefix *ref*, indicating that they are housed in the reference section of the library. Like periodicals, newspapers, and microfilm, print reference resources are usually available only for in-house research and cannot be checked out.

Reference librarians are specialists in the field of information science. They are often able to suggest additional print or electronic resources that you might otherwise overlook. If you plan to use the reference section, visit the library during daytime working hours. A full-time reference librarian is more likely to be on hand and available to help you at that time than in the evenings or on weekends.

QUICK CHECK

Supporting Material in the Library

Library resources may include

- Books
- Periodicals
- Online databases
- Newspapers
- Reference resources

Interviews

When you don't know the answers to some of the important questions raised by your speech topic but you can think of someone who might, consider interviewing that person to get material for your speech. For example, if you are preparing a speech on the quality of food in the dining hall, who better to ask about the subject than the director of food services? If you want to discuss the pros and cons of building a new prison in an urban area, you might interview an official of the correctional service, a representative of the city administration, and a resident of the area. Or if you want to explain why Al Gore lost the 2000 presidential election even though he won the popular vote, you might consult a professor of political science or American history.

Consider a word of caution, however, before you decide that an interview is necessary: Be sure that your questions cannot be answered easily by looking at a Web site or reading a newspaper article or a book. Do some preliminary reading on your subject before you decide to take up someone's valuable time in an interview. If you decide that only an interview can give you the material you need, you should prepare for it in advance.

Preparing for the Interview

- *Determine your purpose.* The first step in preparing for an interview is to establish a purpose or objective for it. Specifically, what do you need to find out? Do you need hard facts that you cannot obtain from other sources? Do you need the interviewee's expert testimony on your subject? Or do you need an explanation of some of the information that you have found in print sources?
- *Schedule the interview.* Once you have a specific purpose for the interview and have decided whom you need to speak with, arrange a meeting. Telephone the person, explain briefly who you are and why you are calling, and ask for an appointment. Most people are flattered to have their authority and knowledge recognized and willingly grant interviews to serious students if schedules permit.

  If you are considering making an audio or video recording of the interview, ask for the interviewee's permission during this initial contact. If the person does

not want to be recorded, you will need to be prepared to gather your information without electronic assistance.

- *Plan your questions*. Before your interview, find out as much as you can about both your subject and the person you are interviewing. Prepare questions that take full advantage of the interviewee's specific knowledge of your subject. You can do this only if you already know a good deal about your subject.

  It is also helpful to think about how you should combine the two basic types of interview questions: closed-ended and open-ended. Open-ended questions often follow closed-ended questions. If the person you are interviewing answers a closed-ended question with a simple yes or no, you might wish to follow up by asking "Why?"

Conducting the Interview

- *On your mark . . .* Dress appropriately for the interview. For most interviews, conservative, businesslike clothes show that you are serious about the interview and that you respect the norms of your interviewee's world.

  Take paper and pen or pencil for note-taking. Even if you are planning to record the interview, you may want to turn the recorder off at some point during the interview, so you'll need an alternative. Or Murphy's Law may break your recorder. Ensure that the interview can continue, in spite of any mishap.

- *Get set . . .* Arrive for the interview a few minutes ahead of schedule. Be prepared, however, to wait patiently, if necessary.

  Once you are settled with the person you will interview, remind him or her of your purpose. If you are familiar with and admire the work the interviewee has done or published, don't hesitate to say so. Sincere flattery can help to set a positive tone for the exchange. If you have decided to use a recorder and the person has agreed, set it up. You may keep it out of sight once the interviewee has seen it, but never try to hide a recorder at the outset—such a ploy is unethical. If you are going to take written notes, get out your paper and pen. Now you are ready to begin asking your prepared questions.

- *Go!* As you conduct the interview, use the questions that you have prepared as a guide but not a rigid outline. If the person you are interviewing mentions an interesting angle that you had not thought of, don't be afraid to pursue the point. Listen carefully to the person's answers, and ask for clarification of any ideas you don't understand.

  Do not prolong the interview beyond the time limits of your appointment. The person you are interviewing is probably very busy and has been courteous enough to fit you into a tight schedule. Ending the interview on time is simply returning the courtesy. Thank your interviewee for his or her contribution, and leave.

Following Up the Interview As soon as possible after the interview, read through your notes carefully, and rewrite any portions that may be illegible. If you

recorded the interview, label the recording with the date and the interviewee's name. You will soon want to transfer any significant facts, opinions, or anecdotes from either notes or the recording to index cards or to a word-processing file.

7.b Research Strategies

You have Internet access. You know the kinds of materials and services your library offers and how to use them. In short, you're ready to begin researching your speech. But unless you approach this next phase of speech preparation systematically, you may find yourself wasting a good deal of time and energy retracing steps to find bits of information that you remember seeing but forgot to bookmark, print out, or write down the first time.

Well-organized research strategies can make your efforts easier and more efficient. You need to develop a preliminary bibliography, evaluate the usefulness of resources, take notes, and identify possible presentation aids.

Develop a Preliminary Bibliography

Creating a **preliminary bibliography**, or list of promising potential resources, should be your first research goal. The preliminary bibliography should include electronic resources as well as print materials. You will probably discover more resources than you actually look at or refer to in your speech; at this stage, the bibliography simply serves as a menu of possibilities. How many resources should you list in a preliminary bibliography for, say, a ten-minute speech? A reasonable number might be ten or twelve. If you have many more than that, you might feel overwhelmed. If you have fewer, you might have too little information.

You will need to develop a system for keeping track of your resources. You can let your information source help you with record keeping:

- *Web sources*. Web browsers let you bookmark pages for future reference and ready access; your bookmarks can serve as one part of your preliminary bibliography.
- *Online database sources*. Many databases allow you to print out the references you discover. These printouts can be a second part of your preliminary bibliography.
- *Print sources*. If you are using more traditional catalogs and indexes, you will need to copy down all the necessary bibliographical information described in the How To box. Using three- by five-inch note cards will give you the greatest flexibility. Later, you can omit some of the cards, add others, write comments on them, or alphabetize them much more easily than you could if you had made a list on a sheet of paper.

HOW TO

Format a Preliminary Bibliography

The key to developing a useful bibliography is to establish a consistent format. The two most common formats, or documentation styles, are those developed by the MLA (Modern Language Association) and the APA (American Psychological Association). MLA style is usually used in the humanities, APA style in the natural and social sciences. Detailed instructions for formatting bibliography citations can be found in the style guides published by the MLA and APA and on Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/. Check with your instructor about which format he or she prefers.

No matter which format you use, you will most likely need the following information about your sources:

- *For a book.* You should record the author's name, the title of the book, the publisher and date of publication, and the library's call number. Figure 7.4 illustrates how to transfer information from an electronic-catalog entry to a bibliography card.

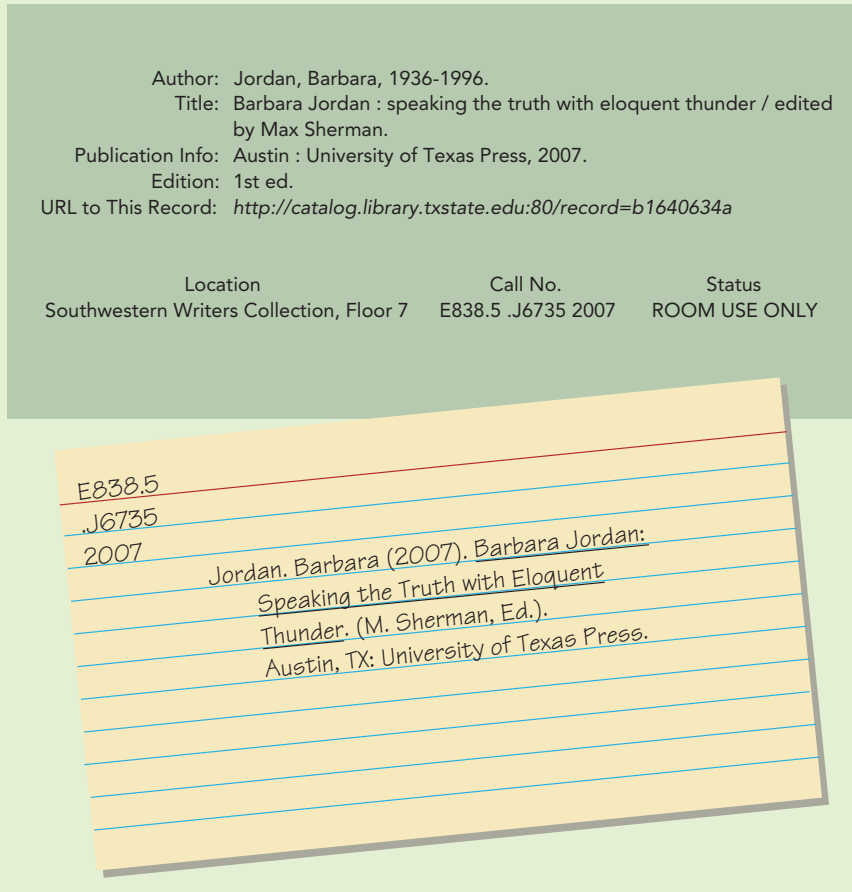


FIGURE 7.4 *Transferring Information from an Electronic-Catalog Entry to a Bibliography Card*

- *For an article in a periodical or newspaper.* You should document the author's name, the title of the article, the title of the periodical, the date of publication, and inclusive page numbers of the article. Figure 7.5 illustrates a bibliography entry in APA style for a newspaper article.

Liptak, A. (2010, June 28). Study finds questioning of nominees to be useful. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/

FIGURE 7.5 *A Bibliography Entry in APA Style*

- *For other print resources.* As long as you record the title, author, publisher, date, and page number, you will probably have at hand the information you need.
- *For Web pages and other electronic resources.* Gather similar authorship, publisher, and date information as well as the URLs of Web sites.

Locate Resources

You should have no trouble obtaining the actual texts of resources from the Web and online databases. For all the other items in your preliminary bibliography, you will need to locate the resources yourself. See the discussion earlier in this chapter on exploring traditional library holdings.

Evaluate the Usefulness of Resources

It makes sense to gauge the potential usefulness of your resources before you begin to read more closely and take notes. Think critically about how the various resources you have found are likely to help you achieve your purpose and about how effective they are likely to be with your audience. Glance over the tables of contents of books, and flip quickly through the texts to note any charts, graphs, or other visual materials that might be used as visual aids. Skim a key chapter or two. Skim shorter articles, pamphlets, and fact sheets as well.

Take Notes

Once you have located, previewed, and ranked your resources, you are ready to begin more careful reading and note-taking.

- Beginning with the resources that you think have the greatest potential, record any examples, statistics, opinions, or other supporting material that might be useful to your speech. You can copy them by hand, photocopy them, download them into a computer file, or print them out. Be sure to identify the source.
- Even if you plan to photocopy or enter most of your notes into a word-processing file, carry a few note cards with you whenever you are working on a speech. You can use one to jot down a fact you discover in a magazine article or hear on the

evening news. An advantage of using note cards is that you can later arrange them in the order of your speech outline, simplifying the integration of supporting material into the speech.

- If you copy a phrase, sentence, or paragraph verbatim from a source, be sure to put quotation marks around it. You might need to know later whether it was a direct quote or a paraphrase. (This information will be obvious, of course, on printouts or photocopies.) Figure 7.6 illustrates two note cards: one with a paraphrased note and one with a direct quotation.

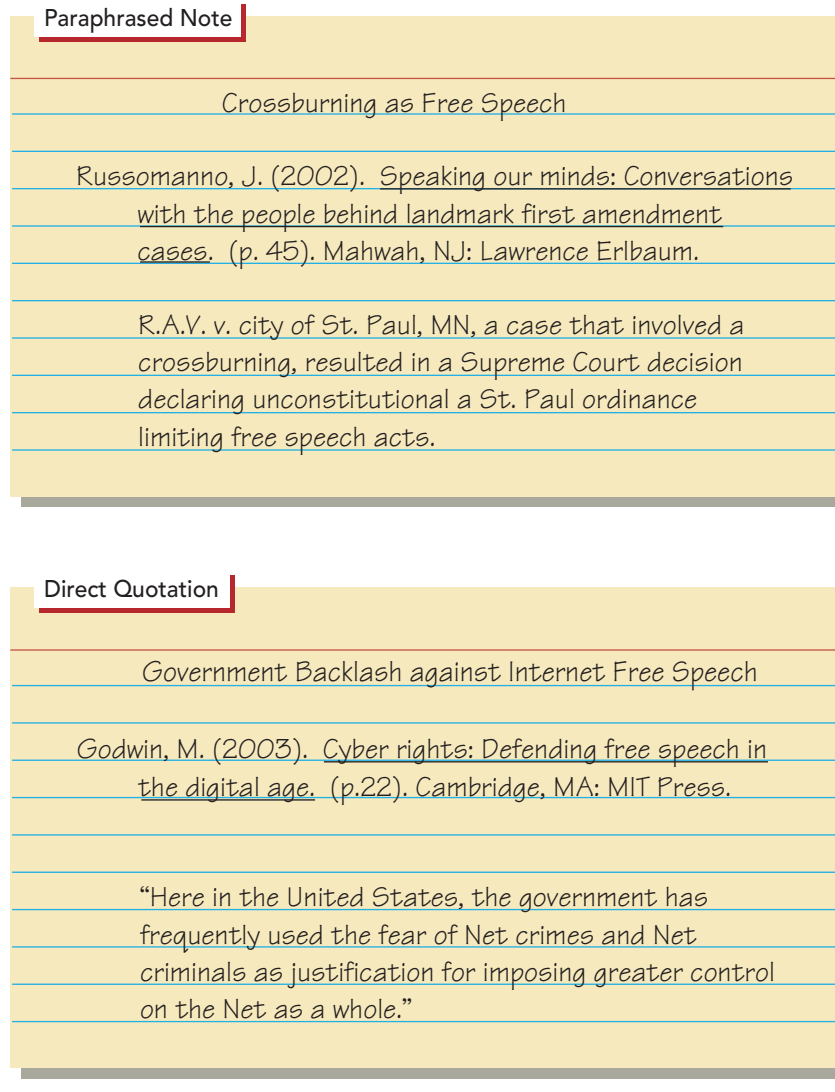


FIGURE 7.6 *Sample Note Cards*

- Record the source of the supporting material. In Chapter 3, we discuss the ethical importance of crediting all sources of ideas and information. If you consistently record your sources when you take notes, you will avoid the possibility of committing unintentional plagiarism.
- Leave enough space at the top of each note card or page for a heading that summarizes content. Such headings make it easier to find a particular specific note later.

Identify Possible Presentation Aids

In addition to discovering verbal supporting material in your sources, you may also find charts, graphs, photographs, and other potentially valuable visual material.

You might think that you will be able to remember what visuals were in which sources. But many speakers have experienced frustrating searches for that "perfect" presentation aid they remember seeing somewhere while they were taking notes for their speech. Even if you are not certain at this point that you will even use presentation aids in your speech, it can't hurt to print out, photocopy, or sketch on a note card any good possibilities, recording those sources of information just as you did for your written materials. Then, when the time comes to consider whether and where presentation aids might enhance the speech, you will have some readily at hand. In Chapter 14, we discuss types of presentation aids and provide guidelines for their use.

QUICK CHECK

Research Strategies

- Develop a preliminary bibliography.
- Consider the potential usefulness of sources.
- Take notes.
- Identify possible presentation aids.

7.c Types of Supporting Material

Once you have discovered likely sources, developed a preliminary bibliography of those sources, read them, assessed their usefulness, taken notes, and identified possible presentation aids, you are ready to make decisions about how to use your information to best advantage. You will need to look at your speech from your audience members' perspective and decide where an explanation might help them to understand a point, where statistics might convince them of the significance of a problem, and where an illustration might stir their emotions. Next, we will discuss these and other types of supporting material and present guidelines for using them effectively.

Illustrations

Novelist Michael Cunningham, acclaimed author of *The Hours*, often reads to standing-room-only crowds. He explains the appeal of such live readings in this way: "It's very much about storytelling . . . you're all gathered around the campfire—'I'm going to tell you about these people, and what happened to them.'"[3] Cunningham is right. A story or anecdote—an **illustration**—almost always guarantees audience interest by appealing to their emotions. "Stories get you out of your head and into your gut" is how one professional speech coach explains the universal appeal of illustrations.[4]

Let's look more closely at different kinds of illustrations and examine some guidelines for using them.

Brief Illustrations

A **brief illustration** is an unelaborated example that is often no longer than a sentence or two. In a speech to the United Nations, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton offered this brief illustration of women making a difference:

> In South Africa, women living in shantytowns came together to build a housing development outside Cape Town all on their own, brick by brick. And today, their community has grown to more than 50,000 homes for low-income families, most of them female-headed.[5]

It is often helpful to use multiple brief illustrations. Sometimes, a series of brief illustrations can have more impact than either a single brief illustration or a more detailed extended illustration. In addition, although an audience could dismiss a single illustration as an exception, two or more illustrations strongly suggest a trend or norm.

Extended Illustrations

Longer and more detailed than the brief illustration, the **extended illustration** resembles a story. It is more vividly descriptive than a brief illustration, and it has a plot—an opening, complications, a climax, and a resolution. Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd told this moving story of two British sisters who were forcibly taken to Australia under a Child Migrants Program in the 1950s:

> Judy remembers the day they were first taken to the home and her sister Robyn bolted from the gate and ran away.
>
> The later found her and dragged her back.
>
> Robyn and Judy remember that they kept waiting and waiting for just someone, someone to come and pick them up—but no-one, no-one ever came.
>
> They recall being hit with belt buckles and bamboo.
>
> They said the place they grew up in was utterly, utterly loveless.[6]

To use an extended illustration takes more time than citing a brief example, but longer stories can be more dramatic and emotionally compelling. As we discuss in Chapter 9, extended illustrations can work well as speech introductions. And Chapter 15 considers the use of extended illustrations in informative speeches.

Hypothetical Illustrations

Hypothetical illustrations describe situations or events that have not actually occurred. Rather, they are scenarios that *might* happen.

Plausible hypothetical illustrations enable your audience to imagine themselves in a particular situation. The following hypothetical illustration comes from a speech on how cell phone technology can change communication in developing countries:

> Imagine someone in China or Africa who is gaining access to e-mail for the first time, how it will improve [his or her] efficiency and ability to connect with others.[7]

Notice the word *imagine* in this illustration. The purpose of a hypothetical illustration is not to trick your listeners into believing a bogus story. They should be aware from the beginning that the illustration is hypothetical.

Using Illustrations Effectively Illustrations are almost guaranteed attention getters, as well as a way to support your statements. But even this excellent form of support can be ineffective if not used to its best advantage. The How To box offers ideas to help you use illustrations more effectively in your speeches.

HOW TO

Use Illustrations in Your Speech

- *Be sure that your illustrations are relevant to what they are supposed to support.* Many student speakers, learning of the value of illustrations, go to great lengths to use as many as they can in their speeches. If their illustrations have little bearing on the specific point the speakers are trying to make, their listeners can become confused.
- *Choose illustrations that represent a trend.* It is not ethical to find one or two isolated illustrations and use them as though they were typical. If your illustrations are rare instances, you owe it to your listeners to tell them so.
- *Make your illustrations vivid and specific.* If you have chosen to tell a poignant story, give it plenty of detail so that it will come alive in the minds of your listeners. Paint a mental picture of the people, places, and things involved.
- *Use illustrations with which your listeners can identify.* If, on hearing your illustration, your listeners mentally shrug and think, "That could never happen to me," the power of your story is considerably lessened. Just as you should use illustrations that are typical, so too should you use audience-centered illustrations—ones to which the members of your audience can relate. The best illustrations are the ones that your listeners can imagine experiencing themselves. If you cannot find a plausible example, you might want to invent a hypothetical one that you can gear specifically to your audience. You can then be sure of its pertinence to your listeners.
- *Remember that the best illustrations are personal ones.* Speakers gain conviction and enthusiasm when they talk about personal experiences. Of course, you will not have had personal experience with every topic on which you may speak. The best illustrations for a speech on American military strategy during the Revolutionary War might come from the letters of George Washington. But if you have had personal experience with the subject on which you are speaking, be sure to describe that experience to the audience.

Descriptions and Explanations

Probably the most commonly used forms of support are descriptions and explanations. A **description**, or word picture, provides the details that allow audience members to develop mental images of what a speaker is talking about. An **explanation** is a statement that makes clear how something is done or why it exists in its present form or existed in its past form.

Describing

> Write for the eye, the ear, the nose, and all the senses. In other words, be as vivid as you possibly can.[8]

This advice from a professional speechwriter acknowledges that, in effect, description creates images that allow listeners mentally to see, hear, smell, touch, or taste what you are describing. More specific instructions for constructing word pictures are given in Chapter 15.

Description may be used in a brief example, an extended illustration, or a hypothetical instance or by itself. One speaker briefly but vividly described to his audience the iconic moon photograph taken by the Apollo 8 astronauts:

> The photograph—dubbed *Earthrise*—shows our small, blue planet rising above a desolate lunar landscape.[9]

Explaining How In a speech to the United Nations General Assembly in the fall of 2008, President Barack Obama explained how the United Nations works for the good of people everywhere:

> The United Nations does extraordinary good around the world—feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, mending places that have been broken.[10]

Speakers who discuss or demonstrate processes of any kind rely at least in part on explanations of how those processes work.

Explaining Why Explaining why involves giving reasons for or consequences of a policy, principle, or event. The president and founder of Study Abroad Alumni International explained to a Study Abroad conference why global awareness is important:

> Why is global awareness so important? . . . Every six seconds a child dies of hunger. I think we all need to be aware of this . . . and we need to do something about it.[11]

Using Descriptions and Explanations Effectively When large sections of a speech contain long, nonspecific explanations, audience eyelids are apt to droop. The following suggestions can help you to use descriptions and explanations effectively in your speeches.

- *Keep your descriptions and explanations brief.* Too many details may make your listeners say your speech was "everything I *never* wanted to know about the subject."

- *Use language that is as specific and concrete as possible.* Vivid and specific language helps you to hold the audience's attention and paint in your listeners' minds the image you are trying to communicate. Chapter 12 provides more tips for making your language specific.
- *Avoid too much description and explanation.* You can hold your audience's attention more effectively if you alternate explanations and descriptions with other types of supporting material, such as brief examples or statistics.

Definitions

Definitions, statements of what terms mean or how they are applied in specific instances, have two justifiable uses in speeches. First, a speaker should be sure to explain the meaning of any and all specialized, technical, or little-known terms in his or her speech. Such definitions are usually achieved by *classification*, the kind of definition you would find in a dictionary. Alternatively, a speaker may define a term by showing how it works or how it is applied in a specific instance—what is known as an *operational definition*.

Definitions by Classification

A **definition by classification** places a term in the general class, group, or family to which it belongs and differentiates it from all the other members of that class. The president of the American Association of Retired Persons defined the term "medical error" for her audience this way:

> A simple definition of a medical error is a preventable adverse effect of some form of medical care.[12]

Operational Definitions

Sometimes a word or phrase may be familiar to an audience, but as a speaker, you may be applying it in a specific way that needs to be clarified. In such cases, you might provide an **operational definition**, explaining how something works or what it does.

Shortly after the launch of Microsoft Windows 7, Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer operationally defined the new operating system for an audience:

> What is Windows 7 at the end of the day? What were we really most trying to do? We were trying to make the everyday usage of the PC better in the ways our customers wanted: Simpler, faster, more responsive.[13]

The How To box gives suggestions that can help you use definitions effectively in your speeches.

HOW TO

Use Definitions in Your Speech

- *Use a definition only when needed.* Novice speakers too often use a definition as an easy introduction or a time-filler. Resist the temptation to provide a definition unless you are using a relatively obscure term or one with several definitions.

- *Be certain that your definition is understandable.* Give your listeners definitions that are immediately and easily understandable, or you will have wasted your time and perhaps even lost your audience.
- *Be certain that your definition and your use of a term are consistent throughout a speech.* Even seemingly simple words can create confusion if they are not defined and used consistently. For example, Roy opened his speech on the potential hazards of abusing nonprescription painkillers by defining *drugs* as nonprescription painkillers. A few minutes later, he confused his audience by using the word *drug* to refer to cocaine. Once he had defined the term, he should have used it only in that context throughout the speech.

Analogies

An **analogy** is a comparison. Like a definition, it increases understanding; unlike a definition, it deals with relationships and comparisons—between the new and the old, the unknown and the known, or any other pairs of ideas or things. Analogies can help your listeners to understand unfamiliar ideas, things, and situations by showing how these matters are similar to something they already know.

There are two types of analogies. A *literal* analogy compares things that are actually similar (two sports, two cities, two events). A *figurative* analogy may take the form of a simile or a metaphor.

Literal Analogies

Student speaker James compared insects with ocean crustaceans when he advocated utilizing insects for food:

> Crustaceans are literally the insects of the sea: They're both arthropods. But where crustaceans feed on trash, insects feed on nature's salad bar.[14]

James's comparison is a **literal analogy**—a comparison between two similar things. If your listeners are from a culture or group other than your own or the one from which the speech derives, literal analogies that draw on the listeners' culture or group may help them to understand more readily the less familiar places, things, and situations you are discussing. Literal analogies are often employed by people who want to influence public policy. For example, proponents of trade restrictions argue that because Japan maintains its trade balance through stringent import controls, so should the United States. The more similarities a policymaker can show between the policies or situations being compared, the better his or her chances of being persuasive.

Figurative Analogies

On a warm July afternoon in 1848, feminist Elizabeth Cady Stanton delivered the keynote address to the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York. Near the end of her speech, she offered this impassioned analogy:

> Voices were the visitors and advisers of Joan of Arc. Do not "voices" come to us daily from the haunts of poverty, sorrow, degradation, and despair, already too long unheeded?

> Now is the time for the women of this country, if they would save our free institutions, to defend the right, to buckle on the armor that can best resist the keenest weapons of the enemy—contempt and ridicule.[15]

A literal analogy might have compared the status of women in medieval France to that of women in nineteenth-century America. But the figurative analogy that Stanton employed compared the voices that moved Joan of Arc to the social ills faced by nineteenth-century women. A **figurative analogy** is a comparison between two essentially dissimilar things that share some features on which the comparison depends.

Because it relies not on facts or statistics, but rather on imaginative insights, the figurative analogy is not considered hard evidence. But because it is creative, it is inherently interesting and should help grab an audience's attention. In a speech titled "Short-Term Demands Vs. Long-Term Responsibilities," PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi used this figurative analogy:

> Line the characters in the Hindu epic, the *Ramayana*, capitalism has the ability to assume different forms for different times and different nations.[16]

Using Analogies Effectively Two suggestions can help you to use literal and figurative analogies more effectively:

- *Be sure that the two things you compare in a literal analogy are very similar.* The more alike the two things being compared, the more likely it is that the analogy will stand up under attack.
- *Be sure that the essential similarity between the two objects of a figurative analogy is readily apparent.* When you use a figurative analogy, it is crucial to make clear the similarity on which the analogy is based. If you do not, your audience will end up wondering what in the world you are talking about.

Statistics

Many of us live in awe of numbers, or **statistics**. Perhaps nowhere is our respect for statistics so evident—and so exploited—as in advertising. If three out of four doctors surveyed recommend Pain Away aspirin, it must be the best. If Sudsy Soap is 99.9 percent pure (whatever that means), surely it will help our complexions. And if nine out of ten people like Sloppy Catsup in the taste test, we will certainly buy some for this weekend's barbecue. How can the statistics be wrong?

The truth about statistics falls somewhere between such unconditional faith in numbers and the wry observation that "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics."

Using Statistics as Support Statistics can be expressed as either counts or percentages. Verizon CEO Ivan Seidenberg used a count and a percentage in the same sentence in his speech to a communications conference:

> Using smart grids and mobile technologies to manage electric power could create 280,000 new jobs and cut carbon emissions by more than 20 percent by 2020.[17]

Using Statistics Effectively The following guidelines can help you to analyze and use statistics effectively and correctly:

- *Use reliable sources.* It has been said that figures don't lie, but liars figure! Indeed, statistics can be produced to support almost any conclusion desired. Your goal is to cite *authoritative* and *unbiased* sources.
- *Use authoritative sources.* No source is an authority on everything; therefore, no source can be credible on all subjects. The most authoritative source is the **primary source**—the original collector and interpreter of the data. If you find an interesting statistic in a newspaper or magazine article, look closely to see whether a source is cited. If it is, try to find that source and the original report of the statistic. Do not just assume that the secondhand account, or **secondary source**, has reported the statistic accurately and fairly. As often as possible, go to the primary source.
- *Use unbiased sources.* As well as being reputable and authoritative, sources should be as unbiased as possible. We usually extend to government research and various independent sources of statistics the courtesy of thinking them unbiased. Because they are, for the most part, supposed to be unaffiliated with any special interest, statistics from such sources are presumed to be less biased than those coming from such organizations as the American Tobacco Institute, the AFL-CIO, or Microsoft. All three organizations have some special interest at stake, and the data they gather are more likely to reflect their biases.

  As you evaluate your sources, try to find out how the statistics were gathered. For example, if a statistic relies on a sample, how was the sample taken? A Thursday afternoon telephone poll of twenty registered voters in Brooklyn is not an adequate sample of New York City voters. The sample is too small and too geographically limited. In addition, it excludes anyone without a telephone or anyone who is unlikely to be at home when the survey was conducted. Sample sizes and survey methods do vary widely, but most legitimate polls involve samples of 500 to 2,000 people, selected at random from a larger population. Of course, finding out about the statistical methodology may be more difficult than discovering the source of the statistic, but if you can find it, the information will help you to analyze the value of the statistic.
- *Interpret statistics accurately.* People are often swayed by statistics that sound good but have, in fact, been wrongly calculated or misinterpreted. In an interview for *The New York Times*, Joel Best, author of *Damned Lies and Statistics: Untangling Numbers from the Media, Politicians, and Activists*, offered his favorite "bad statistic":

  > A student of mine quoted an article that contained the sentence, "Every year since 1950, the number of American children gunned down has doubled." This is [a] mutant statistic. If one child were gunned down in 1950, and two in 1951, then by 1995, . . . there would have been 35 trillion children gunned down, more than the total number of people who ever lived.[18]

Both as a user of statistics in your own speeches and as a consumer of statistics in articles, books, and speeches, be constantly alert to what the statistics actually mean.

- *Make your statistics understandable and memorable.* You can make your statistics easier to understand and more memorable by compacting, exploding, or comparing them, as described in Table 7.2.
- *Round off numbers.* It is much easier to grasp and remember "2 million" than 2,223,147. Percentages, too, are more easily remembered if they are rounded off. Most people seem to remember percentages even better if they are expressed as fractions.
- *Use visual aids to present your statistics.* Most audience members have difficulty remembering a barrage of numbers thrown at them during a speech. But if you display the numbers in a table or graph in front of your listeners, they can more easily grasp the statistics. Figure 7.7 illustrates how a speaker could lay out a table of statistics on how private health care in the United States is distributed among various age groups. Using such a table, you would still need to explain what the numbers mean, but you wouldn't have to recite them. We discuss visual aids in Chapter 14.

TABLE 7.2 *Three Ways to Help Your Audience Understand and Remember Statistics*

Strategy	How to Do It	Example
Compacting	Express the statistic in units or limits that are meaningful or easily understandable to your audience.	A fairly common way to compact a statistic is to express a staggering amount of money in terms of cents: "The United States will spend about $165 million on the arts this year. This equates to 54 cents per citizen."[19]
Exploding	Add or multiplying related numbers—for example, cost per unit times number of units. Because it is larger, the exploded statistic seems more significant than the original figures from which it was derived.	"I printed off donor cards from *organdonor.gov* and sat outside of my college cafeteria. After a mere two hours, I had persuaded seventeen non-donors to sign donor cards. Because the Transplant Society declares on their Web site that the organs donated from one individual can save up to eight lives, in reality my efforts could potentially save 136 people."[20]
Comparing	Compare your statistic with another that heightens its impact.	After Hurricane Ike came ashore in Texas in 2008, then-mayor of Houston Bill White compared the amount of debris left behind to 390 football fields 6 feet high.[21]

Percentage of People with Private Health Insurance Coverage in the United States by Age

Age	Percentage Insured
Under 18 years	90%
18 to 24 years	71%
25 to 34 years	73%
35 to 44 years	81%
45 to 64 years	86%
65 years and over	98%

FIGURE 7.7 *Example of a Table of Statistics*
Source: Data from U.S. Census Bureau, "People Without Health Insurance Coverage by Selected Characteristics: 2007 and 2008." 28 June 2010 <http://www.census.gov/hhles/www.hlthins/data/incpovhlth/2008.tables/html>.

QUICK CHECK

Select Effective Statistics

- Are your sources reputable, authoritative, and unbiased?
- Did you interpret the statistics accurately?
- Are your statistics easy to understand?
- Are your statistics memorable?
- Did you round off the numbers?
- Can you present the statistics with visual aids?

Opinions

Three types of **opinions** (testimony or quotations that express someone's attitudes, beliefs, or values) may be used as supporting material in speeches: the testimonies of expert authorities, the testimonies of ordinary (lay) people with firsthand or eyewitness experience, and quotations from literary works.

Expert Testimony Having already offered statistics on the number of cigars Americans consume annually, Dena emphasized the danger to both smoker and secondhand recipient by providing **expert testimony** (an opinion offered by someone who is an authority on the subject under discussion) from a National Cancer Institute advisor:

> James Repace, an adviser to the National Cancer Institute, states, "If you have to breathe secondhand smoke, cigar smoke is a lot worse than cigarette smoke."[22]

The testimony of a recognized authority can add a great deal of weight to your arguments. Or if your topic requires that you make predictions—statements that can be supported only in a marginal way by statistics or examples—the statements of expert authorities may prove to be your most convincing support.

Lay Testimony You are watching the nightly news. Newscasters, reporting on the fires that continue to rage in California, explain how these fires started. They provide statistics on how many thousands of acres have burned and how many hundreds of homes have been destroyed. They describe the intense heat and smoke at the scene of one of the fires and ask an expert—a veteran firefighter—to predict the likelihood that the fires will be brought under control soon. But the most poignant moment of this news story is an interview with a woman who has just been allowed to return to her home and has found it in smoldering ashes. She is a layperson—not a firefighter or an expert on forest fires but someone who has experienced the tragedy firsthand.

Like illustrations, **lay testimony** (an opinion or description offered by a nonexpert who has firsthand experience) can stir an audience's emotions. And although it is neither as authoritative nor as unbiased as expert testimony, lay testimony is often more memorable.

Literary Quotations Another way to make a point memorable is to include in your speech a **literary quotation**, that is, an opinion or description by a writer, expressed in a memorable and often poetic way. Speaking on changes essential to the survival of the automotive industry, Chrysler Corporation CEO Sergio Marchionne drew on the words of philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche:

> The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once said that "what really arouses indignation against suffering is not suffering as such but the senselessness of suffering. . . ." And a crisis that does not result in enduring changes, in fundamental changes, will have been very senseless indeed.[23]

Note that the Nietzsche quotation is short. Brief, pointed quotations usually have greater audience impact than longer, more rambling ones. As Shakespeare said, "Brevity is the soul of wit" (*Hamlet*, II: 2).

Literary quotations have the additional advantage of being easily accessible. You'll find any number of quotation dictionaries on the Web and in the reference sections of most libraries. Arranged alphabetically by subject, these compilations are easy to use.

Using Opinions Effectively Here are a few suggestions for using opinions effectively in your speeches:

- *Be certain that any authority you cite is an expert on the subject you are discussing.* Advertisers ignore this advice when they use well-known athletes to endorse such items as flashlight batteries, breakfast cereals, and cars. Athletes may indeed be experts on athletic shoes, tennis rackets, or stopwatches, but they lack any specific qualifications to talk about most of the products they endorse.
- *Identify your sources.* If a student quotes the director of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas but identifies that person only as Tom Staley, few listeners will recognize the name, let alone acknowledge his authority.

In Chapter 3, we discussed the importance of citing your sources orally. In the course of doing so, you can provide additional information about the qualifications of those sources, as the student speaker does in the following example:

> The president [of the American Society of Civil Engineers] Wayne Klotz told The New York Times, January 28, 2009, "If our country and its leaders are looking for solutions to the economic crisis, investing in our infrastructure could help to create 2.6 million jobs in construction, consulting, manufacturing, public relations, research, and government positions."[24]

- *Cite unbiased authorities.* Just as the most reliable sources of statistics are unbiased, so too are the most reliable sources of opinion. The chairman of General Motors may offer an expert opinion that the Chevrolet Cruze is the best compact car on the market today. His expertise is unquestionable, but his bias is obvious and makes him a less than trustworthy source of opinion on the subject. A better source would be *Consumer Reports* analyses of the reliability and repair records of compact cars.
- *Cite opinions that are representative of prevailing opinion.* Unless most of the experts in the field share an opinion, its value is limited. Citing such opinion leaves your conclusions open to easy rebuttal.
- *Quote your sources accurately.* If you quote or paraphrase either an expert or a layperson, be certain that your quote or paraphrase is accurate and presented in the context in which the remarks were originally made.
- *Use literary quotations sparingly.* Be sure that you have a valid reason for citing a literary quotation, and then use only one or two at most in a speech.

QUICK CHECK

Types of Supporting Material

Illustrations	Relevant stories
Descriptions	Word pictures
Explanations	Statements that make clear how something is done or why it exists in its present form or existed in a past form
Definitions	Concise explanations of a word or concept
Analogies	Comparisons between two things
Statistics	Numbers that summarize data or examples
Opinions	Testimony or quotations from someone else

7.d The Best Supporting Material

In this chapter, we have discussed six criteria for evaluating Web sites: accountability, accuracy, objectivity, currency, usability, and diversity. We have also presented guidelines for using each of six types of supporting material effectively. However, even after you have applied these criteria and guidelines and have eliminated some material, you might still have more supporting material than you can possibly use for a short speech. How do you decide what to use and what to eliminate? The How To box suggests some considerations that help you to make that final cut.

HOW TO

Decide Which Is Your Best Supporting Material

- *Magnitude.* Bigger is better. The larger the numbers, the more convincing your statistics. The more experts who support your point of view, the more your expert testimony will command your audience's attention.
- *Proximity.* The best supporting material is whatever is the most relevant to your listeners, or the closest to home. If you can demonstrate how an incident could affect audience members themselves, that illustration will have far greater impact than a more remote one.
- *Concreteness.* If you need to discuss principles and theories, explain them with concrete examples and specific statistics.
- *Variety.* A mix of illustrations, opinions, definitions, and statistics, for example, is much more interesting and convincing than is the exclusive use of any one type of supporting material.
- *Humor.* Audiences usually appreciate a touch of humor in an example or opinion. Only if your audience is unlikely to understand the humor or if your speech is on a *very* somber and serious topic is humor not appropriate.
- *Suitability.* Your final decision about whether to use a certain piece of supporting material will depend on its suitability to you, your speech, the occasion, and—as we continue to stress throughout the book—your audience. For example, you would probably use more statistics in a speech to a group of scientists than in an after-luncheon talk to the local Rotary Club.

STUDY GUIDE

Remember These Main Ideas

- There are five sources of supporting material: personal knowledge and experiences, the Internet, library resources, interviews, and resources from special-interest groups and organizations.
- Using illustrations, explanations, definitions, or other supporting material from your own knowledge and experience has the advantage of increasing the audience's respect for your authority.
- Internet resources are accessible through Web directories and search engines, but you must evaluate who is accountable for the resources and whether they are accurate, objective, current, usable, and sensitive to diversity.
- Online databases, accessed via networked computer, provide access to bibliographic information, abstracts, and full texts for a variety of resources, including periodicals, newspapers, government documents, and even books.
- Traditional library holdings include books, periodicals, full-text databases, newspapers, and reference resources.
- When interviewing someone, establish a purpose or objective for the interview, prepare thoroughly for the interview, and conduct the interview professionally and ethically. Follow up by thanking the interviewee, reading your notes, and labeling any recorded information.
- Once you have discovered possible resources, you should develop a preliminary bibliography of those resources, evaluate their potential usefulness, take notes, and identify possible presentation aids.
- You can use various types of supporting material in your speech, including illustrations, descriptions and explanations, definitions, analogies, statistics, and opinions.
- Once you have gathered a variety of supporting material, look at your speech from your audience's perspective, and decide where each material will help your audience the most.
- A mix of supporting material is much more interesting and convincing than is the exclusive use of any one type.
- In addition to variety, criteria for the most effective support include magnitude, proximity, concreteness, variety, humor, and suitability.

Understand These Key Terms

analogy (p. 161)
Boolean search (p. 143)
brief illustration (p. 157)
card catalog (p. 147)
definition (p. 160)
definition by classification (p. 160)
description (p. 159)
expert testimony (p. 166)
explanation (p. 159)
extended illustration (p. 157)

figurative analogy (p. 162)
hypothetical illustrations (p. 157)
illustration (p. 157)
Internet (p. 143)
lay testimony (p. 166)
literal analogy (p. 161)
literary quotation (p. 166)
online database (p. 144)
operational definition (p. 160)
opinions (p. 165)
periodical index (p. 148)
preliminary bibliography (p. 152)
primary source (p. 163)
secondary source (p. 163)
stacks (p. 149)
statistics (p. 162)
vertical search engine (p. 143)
World Wide Web (p. 143)

Think about These Questions

- Explain how you might use each of the five key sources of supporting material to help you develop an informative speech on how to buy a new computer.
- Electronic and print indexes and databases sometimes include abstracts of books and articles rather than full texts. If you have read only the abstract of a source, is it ethical to include that source on your speech bibliography?
- You neglected to record the bibliographic information for one of your information sources: a magazine article found in the library. You discover this the night before you must deliver your speech, and you have no time to return to the library. How can you solve your problem in an ethical way?
- Reread the guidelines for each type of supporting material. Can any guidelines for the effective use of supporting material might also be considered a guideline for the ethical use of supporting material? Explain your choices.
- Is it ever ethical to invent supporting material if you have been unable to find what you need for your speech? Explain.

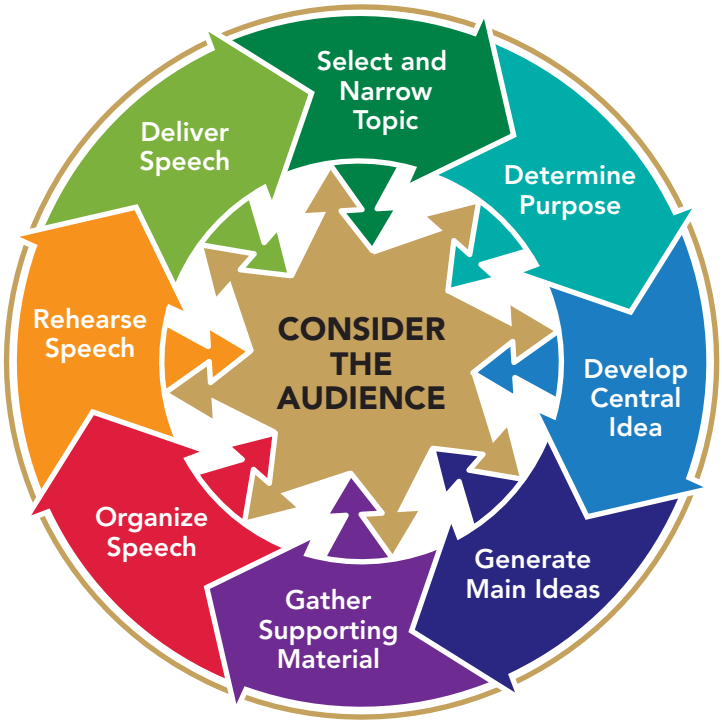
Learn More Online

These Web sites might help you in your quest to find that perfect story, riveting illustration, recent statistic, or well-worded definition.

Quick Reference Desk of Purdue University This powerful site provides links to some of the most common reference material found in most libraries.
www.lib.purdue.edu/eresources/readyref/

Biography.com Use this site to find information on more than 20,000 famous people. Anecdotes about them can serve as illustrations for a speech
www.biography.com.

Federal Government Statistics
U.S. Bureau of the Census:
www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html
Federal Citizen Information Center:
www.info.gov/



Crafting a Speech 4

8 Organizing Your Speech
9 Introducing Your Speech
10 Concluding Your Speech
11 Outlining and Editing Your Speech
12 Using Words Well: Speaker Language and Style

Questions to Guide You Through This Section:

8 Organizing Your Speech

To answer the question…	Go to page…
What are the most common ways to organize a speech?	172
Do I need to divide my main ideas into subpoints?	181
How do I work my supporting material into my speech?	181
How do I let the audience know when I'm changing topics?	185

9 Introducing Your Speech

To answer the question…	Go to page…
What can a good introduction do for my speech?	196
What are some good ways to start my speech?	200

10 Concluding Your Speech

To answer the question…	Go to page…
What purposes does the conclusion serve?	212
What are some good ways to end my speech?	214

11 Outlining and Editing Your Speech

To answer the question…	Go to page…
Help! My teacher requires an outline of my speech. How do I make one?	220
Now that I've got an outline, how do I use it as I rehearse?	226
What materials can I prepare to use when I speak?	228

12 Using Words Well: Speaker Language and Style

To answer the question…	Go to page…
How is speaking different from writing?	237
How can I make my words interesting and effective?	238
Should I make any changes in my language for a diverse audience?	242
How can I write a speech that my audience will really remember?	249

Organizing Your Speech 8

"Organized thought is the basis of organized action."

—Alfred North Whitehead

OUTLINE

8.a Organizing Your Main Ideas
- Organizing Ideas Topically
- Organizing Ideas Chronologically
- Organizing Ideas Spatially
- Organizing Ideas to Show Cause and Effect
- Organizing Ideas by Problem-Solution
- Acknowledging Cultural Differences in Organization

8.b Subdividing Your Main Ideas

8.c Integrating Your Supporting Material
- Prepare Your Supporting Material
- Organize Your Supporting Material
- Incorporate Your Supporting Material into Your Speech

8.d Developing Signposts
- Transitions
- Previews
- Summaries

8.e Supplementing Signposts with Presentation Aids

Maria went into the lecture hall feeling exhilarated. After all, Dr. Anderson was a Nobel laureate in literature. He would be teaching and lecturing on campus for at least a year. What an opportunity!

Dr. Anderson was greeted by thunderous applause when he walked onto the stage. Maria was aware of an almost electric sense of expectation among the audience members. Pen poised, she awaited his first words.

Five minutes later, Maria still had her pen poised. Dr. Anderson had gotten off to a slow start. Ten minutes later, she laid her pen down and decided to concentrate just on listening. Twenty minutes later, she still had no idea what point Dr. Anderson was trying to make. By the time the lecture was over, Maria was practically asleep. Disappointed, she promised herself that she would skip the remaining lectures in the series.

Dr. Anderson was not a dynamic speaker. But his motivated audience of young would-be authors and admirers might have forgiven that shortcoming. What they were unable to do was to unravel his hour's worth of seemingly pointless rambling—to get some sense of direction or some pattern of ideas from his talk. Dr. Anderson had simply failed to organize his thoughts.

The scenario described above actually happened. Dr. Anderson (not his real name) disappointed many people who had looked forward to his lectures. His inability to organize his ideas made him an ineffectual speaker. No matter how knowledgeable speakers may be, they must organize their ideas in logical patterns. Classical rhetoricians—early students of speech—called the process of developing an orderly speech **disposition**. Speakers need to present ideas, information, examples, illustrations, stories, and statistics in an orderly sequence to ensure that their audience can follow, understand, and remember what is said.

Our model of audience-centered communication, shown in Figure 8.1, emphasizes that speeches are organized for audiences, with decisions about organization based in large part on an analysis of the audience. In this chapter, we will discuss the patterns of organization that are commonly used to arrange the main ideas of a speech. Then we will discuss how to organize subpoints and supporting materials. Finally, we will talk about transitions, previews, and summaries. Creating introductions and conclusions and outlining, the final components of the organizational stage of the preparation process, will be discussed in later chapters.

8.a Organizing Your Main Ideas

In Chapter 6, we discussed how to generate a preliminary plan for your speech by determining whether your central idea had logical divisions, could be supported by several reasons, or could be explained by identifying specific steps. These divisions, reasons, or steps became the main ideas of the body of your speech and the basis for the organization task highlighted in Figure 8.1.

Now you are ready to decide which of your main ideas to discuss first, which one second, and so on. You can choose from among five organizational patterns: (1) topical, (2) chronological, (3) spatial, (4) causal, and (5) problem–solution. Or you can combine several of these patterns. One additional variation of the problem–solution

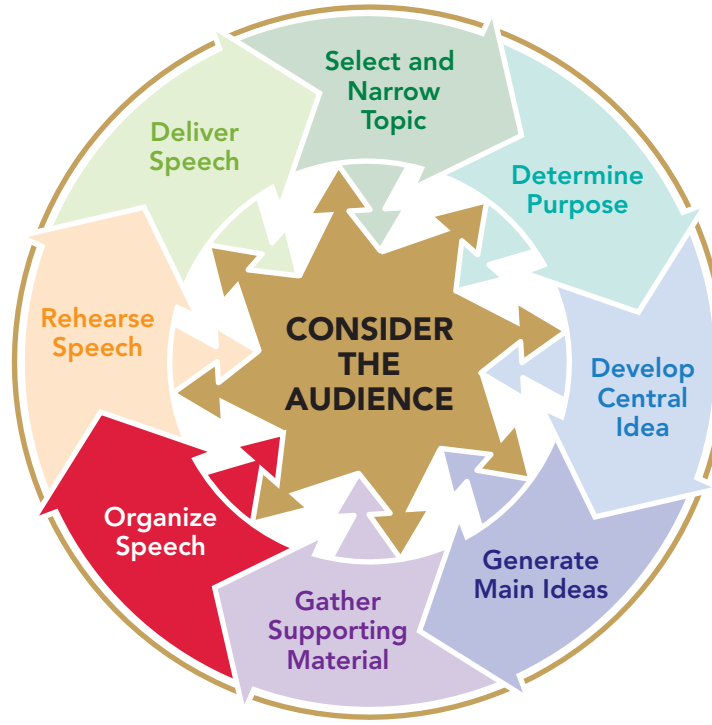


FIGURE 8.1 *Organize your speech to help your audience remember your key ideas and to give your speech clarity and structure.*

pattern is the motivated sequence. Because it is used almost exclusively in persuasive speeches, the motivated sequence is discussed in Chapter 17.

Organizing Ideas Topically

If your central idea has natural divisions, you can often organize your speech topically. Speeches on such diverse topics as factors to consider when selecting a mountain bike, types of infertility treatments, and the various classes of ham-radio licenses all could reflect **topical organization**.

Natural divisions are often essentially equal in importance. It might not matter which point you discuss first, second, or third. You can simply arrange your main ideas as a matter of personal preference. At other times, you may organize your main points based on one of three principles: primacy, recency, or complexity.

Primacy The principle of **primacy** suggests that you discuss your most important or convincing point first in your speech. The beginning of your speech can be the most important position if your listeners are either unfamiliar with your topic or hostile toward your central idea.

If your listeners are uninformed, your first point must introduce them to the topic and define unfamiliar terms that are integral to its discussion. What you say early in your speech will affect your listeners' understanding of the rest of your speech. If your listeners are likely to be hostile toward your central idea, putting your most important or convincing point first will lessen the possibility that you might lose or alienate them before you reach the end of your speech. In addition, your strongest idea may so influence listeners' attitudes that they will be more receptive to your central idea.

Recognizing the controversial nature of stem-cell research, the speaker in the following example arranges the three main points of the speech according to primacy, advancing the most persuasive argument first:

Purpose Statement:	At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to explain the applications of stem-cell research.
Central Idea:	Stem-cell research has three important applications.
Main Ideas:	I. At the most fundamental level, understanding stem cells can help us to understand better the process of human development. II. Stem-cell research could streamline the way we develop and test drugs. III. Stem-cell research can generate cells and tissue that could be used for "cell therapies."[1]

Recency According to the principle of **recency**, the point that was discussed last is the one audiences will remember best. If your audience is at least somewhat knowledgeable about and generally favorable toward your topic and central idea, you should probably organize your main points according to recency.

For example, if your speech is on various living arrangements that are available to college students, you might decide to discuss living at home, rooming in a dorm, joining a fraternity or sorority, and renting an apartment. If you wanted your audience of fellow students to consider living at home because of the savings involved, you would probably discuss that possibility as the fourth and last option. Your speech might have the following structure:

Purpose Statement:	At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to discuss the pros and cons of four living arrangements for college students.
Central Idea:	College students have at least four living arrangements available to them.
Main Ideas:	I. Living in a dormitory II. Renting an apartment III. Joining a fraternity or sorority IV. Living at home

Complexity If your main ideas range from simple to complicated, it makes sense to arrange them in order of **complexity**, progressing from the simple to the more complex. If, for example, you were to explain to your audience how to compile a family health profile and history, you might begin by discussing the most easily accessible source of health information and proceed to the more involved:

Purpose statement:	At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to compile a family health profile and history.
Central idea:	Compiling a family health profile and history can be accomplished with the help of three sources.
Main ideas:	I. Elderly relatives
	II. Old hospital records and death certificates
	III. National health registries[2]

Teachers, from those in the very early elementary grades on up, use order of complexity to organize their courses and lessons. The kindergartner is taught to trace circles before learning to print a lowercase *a*. The young piano student practices scales and arpeggios before playing Beethoven sonatas. The college student practices writing 500-word essays before attempting a major research paper. You have learned most of your skills in order of complexity.

QUICK CHECK

Primacy, Recency, and Complexity

- *Primacy*. Most important point first
- *Recency*. Most important point last
- *Complexity*. Simplest point first, most complex point last

Ordering Ideas Chronologically

If you decide that your central idea could be explained best by a number of steps, you will probably organize those steps chronologically. **Chronological organization** is organization by time; that is, your steps are ordered according to when each occurred or should occur. Historical speeches and how-to speeches are the two kinds of speeches that are usually organized chronologically.

Examples of topics for historical speeches might include the history of the women's movement in the United States, the sequence of events that led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon in 1974, or the development of the modern Olympic Games. You can choose to organize your main points either from earliest to most recent (forward

in time) or from recent events back into history (backward in time). The progression that you choose depends on your personal preference and on whether you want to emphasize the beginning or the end of the sequence.

Forward in Time In the following outline for a speech on the development of the Apple iPad, the speaker moves forward in time, making his last point the one that remains most fresh in the minds of his audience at the end of his speech:

Purpose statement:	At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to trace the major events in the development of the iPad.
Central idea:	Drawing on the technology and market success of earlier devices, the Apple iPad has quickly become a bestseller.
Main ideas:	I. 1993: Newton Message Pad marketed by Apple
	II. 2001: iPod introduced
	III. 2007 iPhone debuted
	IV. iPad unveiled[3]

How-To Explanations How-to explanations are also likely to follow a sequence or series of steps arranged from beginning to end, from the first step to the last—forward in time. A speech explaining how to strip painted furniture might be organized as follows:

Purpose statement:	At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to list the four steps involved in stripping old paint from furniture.
Central idea:	Stripping old paint from furniture requires four steps.
Main ideas:	I. Prepare work area and gather materials.
	II. Apply chemical stripper.
	III. Remove stripper with scrapers and steel wool.
	IV. Clean and sand stripped surfaces.

Backward in Time In another chronologically organized speech, this one discussing the development of YouTube, the speaker wanted to emphasize the inauspicious origins of the popular video site. Therefore, she organized the speech backward in time:

Purpose statement:	At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to describe YouTube's rapid rise from humble beginnings.
Central idea:	The popular video site YouTube grew rapidly from humble beginnings.
Main ideas:	I. November 2006: YouTube acquired by Google
	II. December 2005: YouTube site publicly launched
	III. February 2005: YouTube founded in a garage in Menlo Park, California[4]

Chronological organization, then, involves either forward or backward progression, depending on which end of a set of events the speaker intends to emphasize. The element that is common to both movements is that dates and events are discussed in sequence rather than in random order.

Organizing Ideas Spatially

When you say "As you enter the room, the table is to your right, the easy chair is to your left, and the kitchen door is straight ahead," you are using **spatial organization**: arranging ideas—usually natural divisions of the central idea—according to their location and direction. It does not matter whether you choose to progress up or down, east or west, forward or back, as long as you follow a logical progression. If you skip up, down, over, and back, you will only confuse your listeners rather than painting a distinct word picture.

Speeches on such diverse subjects as the National Museum of the American Indian, the travels of Robert Louis Stevenson, or the structure of an atom can all be organized spatially. Here is a sample outline for the first of those topics:

Purpose statement:	At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to list and describe the four habitats re-created on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.
Central idea:	The grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., are divided into four traditional American Indian habitats.
Main ideas:	I. Upland hardwood forest
	II. Lowland freshwater wetlands
	III. Eastern meadowlands
	IV. Traditional croplands[5]

The organization of this outline is spatial, progressing through the grounds of the museum.

Organizing Ideas to Show Cause and Effect

If your central idea can be developed by discussing either steps or reasons, you might consider organizing your main ideas by **cause and effect**. A speech that is organized to show cause and effect may first identify a situation and then discuss the effects that result from it (cause → effect). Or the speech may present a situation and then seek its causes (effect → cause). As the recency principle would suggest, the cause–effect pattern emphasizes the effects; the effect–cause pattern emphasizes the causes.

Cause–Effect In the following example, Vonda organizes her speech according to cause–effect, discussing the cause (widespread adult illiteracy) as her first main idea and its effects (poverty and social costs) as her second and third main ideas:

Purpose statement:	At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to identify two effects of adult illiteracy.
Central idea:	Adult illiteracy affects everyone.
Main ideas:	I. (*Cause*): Adult illiteracy is widespread in America today. II. (*Effect*): Adult illiterates often live in poverty. III. (*Effect*): Adult illiteracy is costly to society.[6]

Effect–Cause In contrast, Brittany organizes her speech on hurricanes according to an effect–cause pattern, discussing the effect (hurricanes' becoming increasingly destructive) as her first main idea and its causes (the buildup of coastal communities, the warming of the ocean surface, and natural cycles) as her second, third, and fourth main ideas:

Purpose statement:	At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to explain why hurricanes are likely to become increasingly destructive to the United States.
Central idea:	Hurricanes are likely to become increasingly destructive to the United States for three reasons.
Main ideas:	I. (*Effect*): Hurricanes are likely to become increasingly destructive to the United States. II. (*Cause*): The buildup of coastal communities in recent decades has put more people in harm's way. III. (*Cause*): The warming of the ocean surface provides more energy to fuel hurricanes. IV. (*Cause*): Natural cycles are changing in favor of hurricane formation.[7]

In both of the preceding examples, the speakers may decide the order in which they will discuss the main ideas that follow the first main idea by considering the principles of primacy, recency, or complexity.

Organizing Ideas by Problem-Solution

If you want to discuss why a problem exists or what its effects are, you will probably organize your speech according to cause and effect, as discussed in the previous section. However, if you want to emphasize how best to solve the problem, you will probably use a **problem–solution** pattern of organization.

From Problem to Solution Like causes and effects, problems and solutions can be discussed in either order. If you are speaking to an audience that is already fairly aware of a problem but is uncertain how to solve it, you will probably discuss the problem first and then the solution(s), as in this example:

Purpose statement:	At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to list and explain three ways in which crime on university campuses can be reduced.
Central idea:	Crimes on university campuses can be reduced by implementing three safety measures.
Main ideas:	I. (*Problem*): Crimes against both persons and property have increased dramatically on college campuses over the last few years. II. (*Solution*): Crimes could be reduced by stricter enforcement of the Student Right to Know and Campus Security Acts. III. (*Solution*): Crimes could be reduced by assigning student identification numbers that are different from their Social Security numbers. IV. (*Solution*): Crimes could be reduced by converting campus buildings to an integrated security system requiring key cards for admittance.[8]

From Solution to Problem If your audience knows about an action or program that has been implemented but does not know the reasons for its implementation, you might select instead a solution–problem pattern of organization. In the following example, the speaker knows that her listeners are already aware of a new business–school partnership program in their community but believes that they might be unclear about why it has been established:

Purpose statement:	At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to explain how business–school partnership programs can help to solve two of the major problems facing our public schools today.
Central idea:	Business–school partnership programs can help to alleviate at least two of the problems faced by public schools today.
Main ideas:	I. (*Solution*): In a business–school partnership, local businesses provide volunteers, financial support, and in-kind contributions to public schools. II. (*Problem*): Many public schools can no longer afford special programs and fine-arts programs. III. (*Problem*): Many public schools have no resources to fund enrichment materials and opportunities.

Note that in both of the preceding examples, the main ideas are natural divisions of the central idea.

QUICK CHECK

Organize Main Ideas

- Topically
- Chronologically
- Spatially
- To show cause and effect
- To present problems and solutions

Acknowledging Cultural Differences in Organization

Although the five patterns just discussed are typical of the way in which speakers in the United States are expected to organize and process information, they are not necessarily typical of all cultures.[9] In fact, each culture teaches its members patterns of thought and organization that are considered appropriate for various occasions and audiences. On the whole, U.S. speakers tend to be more linear and direct than speakers from Semitic, Asian, Romance, or Russian cultures. Semitic speakers support their main points by pursuing tangents that might seem off-topic to many U.S. speakers. Asians may only allude to a main point through a circuitous route of illustration and parable. And speakers from Romance and Russian cultures tend to begin with a basic principle and then move to facts and illustrations that they only gradually connect to a main point. The models in Figure 8.2 illustrate these culturally diverse patterns of organization.

Of course, these are very broad generalizations. But as an audience member who recognizes the existence of cultural differences, you can better appreciate and understand the organization of a speaker from a culture other than your own. He or she

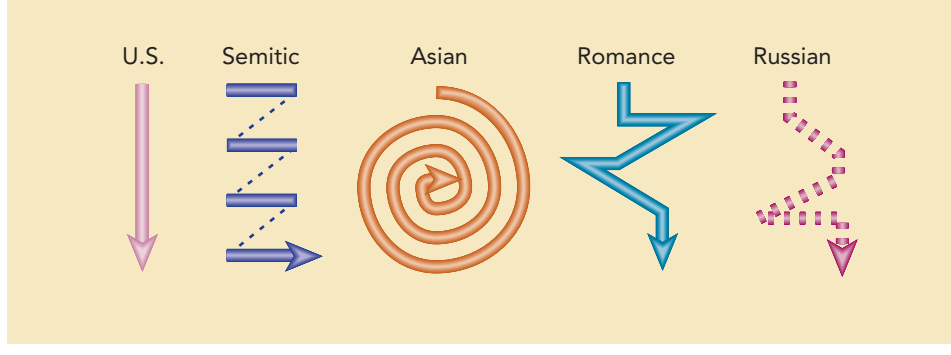


FIGURE 8.2 *Organizational Patterns by Culture*

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might not be disorganized, but simply using organizational strategies that are different from the ones presented earlier in this chapter.

8.b Subdividing Your Main Ideas

After you have decided how to organize your main ideas, you may need to subdivide at least some of them. For example, if you give a how-to speech on dog grooming, your first main idea may be

I. Gather your supplies.

"Supplies" indicates that you need more than one piece of equipment, so you add subpoints that describe the specific supplies needed:

I. Gather your supplies.
   A. Soft brush
   B. Firm brush
   C. Wide-toothed comb
   D. Fine-toothed comb
   E. Scissors
   F. Spray-on detangler

Note that you can arrange your main ideas according to one pattern and your subpoints according to another. For example, the organization of the main ideas of this speech on dog grooming is chronological, but the subpoints of the first main idea are arranged topically. Any of the five organizational patterns that apply to main ideas can apply to subpoints as well.

Don't worry about such outlining details as Roman numerals, letters, and margins. We cover them in Chapter 11. Your goal at this point is to get your ideas and information on paper. Keep in mind, too, that until you have delivered your speech, none of your decisions is final. You may add, regroup, or eliminate main ideas or subpoints at any stage in the preparation process as you consider the needs, interests, and expectations of your audience. Multiple drafts indicate that you are working and reworking ideas to improve your speech and make it the best you can. They do not mean that you are a poor writer or speaker.

8.c Integrating Your Supporting Material

Once you have organized your main ideas and subpoints, you are ready to flesh out the speech with your supporting material.

Prepare Your Supporting Material

As we discussed in Chapter 7, your records of supporting material may be in a variety of formats. The How To box suggests some ideas for working with these different formats of notes. Regardless of which strategy you use to integrate your supporting material, take care not to lose track of the source of the supporting material.

HOW TO

Use Different Source Material Formats

- *Working with an electronic document.* If you have entered your supporting material into a word-processing file, you might want to print out a hard copy of your supporting material so that you can have it in front of you while you work on your speech plan. When you determine where in the speech you need supporting material, find what you need on the hard copy and then go back into the word-processing file to cut and paste that supporting material electronically into your speech plan.
- *Working with photocopies.* If most of your supporting material is photocopied, search these copies for what you need, and then write or type the supporting material into your speech plan.
- *Working with note cards.* If you have written or pasted supporting material on note cards, write each main idea and subpoint on a separate note card of the same size as the ones on which you recorded your supporting material. Arrange these note cards in the order in which you have organized your speech. As you decide how best to organize your supporting material, you can place each supporting-material card behind the appropriate main-idea or subpoint card. You will then have on note cards a complete plan for your speech.

Organize Your Supporting Material

Once you have prepared your supporting material, you are ready to organize it. You might realize that in support of your second main idea, you have an illustration, two statistics, and an opinion. In what order should you present these items?

You can sometimes use the five standard organizational patterns to arrange your supporting material as well as your main ideas and subpoints. Illustrations, for instance, may be organized chronologically. In the following excerpt from a speech on childhood obesity, the speaker arranges several brief examples in a chronological sequence:

> I can think of at least three moments in the past half century that dramatically shifted the course of America's medical and scientific history.
>
> The first time came [on] March 26, 1953—when Jonas Salk called a press conference to announce the discovery of a polio vaccine.
>
> The second time, amazingly, came just four weeks later, when Watson and Crick published their discovery of the double helix structure of DNA.
>
> The third time was in 1964, when U.S. Surgeon General Luther Terry courageously reported that cigarette smoking does cause cancer and other deadly diseases. . . .

> On March 9, 2004, the CDC Director declared that obesity is overtaking smoking and tobacco use as the number-one cause of preventable death in America.[10]

At other times, however, none of the five patterns may seem suited to the supporting materials you have. In those instances, you might need to turn to an organizational strategy that is more specifically adapted to your supporting materials. These strategies include (1) primacy or recency, (2) specificity, (3) complexity, and (4) "soft" to "hard" evidence.

Primacy or Recency We have already discussed how the principles of primacy and recency can determine whether you put material at the beginning or the end of your speech. These patterns are used so frequently to arrange supporting materials that we mention them again here.

Suppose that you have several statistics to support a main point. All are relevant and significant, but one is especially gripping. In a recent speech, American Cancer Society CEO John Seffrin showed images of and described the following brief examples of international tobacco advertising:

> The effort to build brand loyalty begins early. Here is an example of that in Africa—a young man wearing a hat with a cigarette brand logo. . . .
>
> Look at this innocent baby wearing a giant Marlboro logo on his shirt. . . .
>
> Notice how this ad links smoking to American values that are attractive to third-world kids—wealth, sophistication, and urbanity. It also shows African Americans living the American Dream. If you're a poor kid in Africa, this image can be very powerful.
>
> And finally, this one from Bucharest, Romania, which is my favorite. When the Berlin Wall came down, no one rushed into Eastern Europe faster than the tobacco industry. Here you can see the Camel logo etched in the street lights. In my opinion, this is one of the most disturbing examples of the public sector partnering with private industry to the detriment of its citizens.[11]

It is evident that Seffrin applied the principle of recency to his examples, as he identifies the final one as "my favorite" and "one of the most disturbing." The principle of primacy or recency can also be applied to groups of statistics, opinions, or any combination of supporting material.

Specificity Sometimes your supporting material will range from very specific examples to more general overviews of a situation. You may either offer your specific information first and end with your general statement or make the general statement first and support it with specific evidence.

Another application of specificity might be to compact or explode statistics. In her speech on unnecessary prescription drugs, Kristin begins with a sweeping statistic and then compacts it:

> Thirty percent of Americans have asked their doctor about a medicine they saw advertised on TV. And of those, . . . 44 percent received the prescription. That translates into one in eight Americans seeing a drug on TV and later picking it up at their local pharmacy.[12]

Complexity We have discussed organizing subtopics by moving from the simple to the complex. The same method of organization may also determine how you order your supporting material. In many situations, it makes sense to start with the simplest ideas that are easy to understand and work up to more complex ones. In her speech on solar radiation, Nichole first explains the most obvious effects of solar peaks—electrical blackouts and disruptions in radio broadcasts—and then goes on to the more complex effect, cosmic radiation:

> The sun produces storms on its surface in eleven-year cycles. During solar maximum, these storms will make their presence known to the land-bound public through electrical blackouts and disruptions in radio broadcasts. These storms cause the sun to throw off electrically charged ions that, combined with charged particles, enter the Earth's atmosphere from outer space. This is known collectively as cosmic radiation.[13]

Soft Evidence to Hard Evidence Supporting material can also be arranged from "soft" to "hard." **Soft evidence** rests on opinion or inference. Hypothetical illustrations, descriptions, explanations, definitions, analogies, and opinions are usually considered soft. **Hard evidence** includes factual examples and statistics.

Soft-to-hard organization of supporting material relies chiefly on the principle of recency—that the last statement is remembered best. Notice how Beth moves from an illustration to expert testimony (both soft evidence) to a statistic (hard evidence) in her speech on the danger of sand holes:

Illustration (soft evidence)	An article in the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* of June 21, 2007, describes how a hidden sand hole on a beach proved fatal to seventeen-year-old Matthew Gauruder. Playing football on a Rhode Island beach with friends, Matthew jumped to catch a pass and came down into an 8-foot-deep hole that someone had dug on the beach earlier in the day. Almost instantly, the sand caved in around him, burying and suffocating him before rescuers could reach him.
Expert testimony (soft evidence)	Dr. Bradley Maron of Harvard Medical School explains that "the walls of the hole unexpectedly collapsed, leaving virtually no evidence of the hole or location of the victim."
Statistic (hard evidence)	Although people worry more about shark attacks, according to University of Florida statistics, sixteen deaths occurred in sand holes or tunnels between 1990 and 2006, compared with twelve fatal shark attacks for that same period.[14]

The speaker has arranged her supporting material from soft to hard.

QUICK CHECK

Organize Your Supporting Material

Strategy	Description
Primacy	Most important material first
Recency	Most important material last
Specificity	From specific information to general overview or from general overview to specific information
Complexity	From simple to more complex material
Soft to hard evidence	From opinion or hypothetical illustration, for example, to fact or statistic

Incorporate Your Supporting Material into Your Speech

When your supporting material has been logically placed into your plan, your next goal is to incorporate it smoothly into your speech so as to enhance the flow of ideas. The Sample Integration of Supporting Material shows how one speaker skillfully met this goal while delivering a speech on modifying our approach to surviving cancer.

SAMPLE INTEGRATION OF SUPPORTING MATERIAL

While pink ribbons, social walks, and yellow wristbands are uplifting tokens, they reinforce the value of thinking positively at the expense of forcing us to consider the unsettling gravity of this disease.

State the point. The statement should be concise and clear, as it is here.

As cancer survivor Brian Wickman told *The New York Times* on June 30, 2008, when his friends placed him on a pedestal and told him how brave he was, he wasn't allowed to "be human and in pain, angry or depressed."

Cite the source of the supporting material: the author's name (if available) and the title and date of the publication.

Present the supporting material, here a brief illustration.

Our awareness deprives victims of an outlet for their darker fears by deeming them weak . . .

Explain how the supporting material substantiates or develops the point. Do not assume that audience members will automatically make the connection.

Source: "Beyond Ribbons and Wristbands: An Honest Approach to Cancer Activism" by Meredith Regan, Speech for University of Texas Individual Events, Spring 2010. Copyright 2010 by Meredith Regan. Reprinted with permission.

8.d Developing Signposts

Once you have organized your note cards, you have a logically ordered, fairly complete plan for your speech. But if you tried to deliver the speech at this point, you would

find yourself frequently groping for some way to get from one point to the next. Your audience might become frustrated or even confused by your hesitations and awkwardness. So your next organizational task is to develop **signposts**—words and gestures that allow you to move smoothly from one idea to the next throughout your speech, showing relationships between ideas and emphasizing important points. Three types of signposts can serve as glue to hold your speech together: transitions, previews, and summaries.

Transitions

Transitions indicate that a speaker has finished discussing one idea and is moving to another. Transitions may be either verbal or nonverbal. Let's consider some examples of each type.

Verbal Transitions

A speaker can sometimes make a verbal transition simply by repeating a key word from an earlier statement or by using a synonym or a pronoun that refers to an earlier key word or idea. This type of transition is often used to make one sentence flow smoothly into the next. The previous sentence itself is an example: The phrase "this type of transition" refers to the sentence that precedes it. Other verbal transitions are words or phrases that show relationships between ideas. Note the italicized transitional phrases in the following examples:

- *In addition to* transitions, previews and summaries are *also* considered to be signposts.
- *Not only* does plastic packaging use up our scarce resources; it contaminates them *as well*.
- *In other words*, as women's roles have changed, they have *also* contributed to this effect.
- *In summary*, Fanny Brice is probably the best remembered star of Ziegfeld's Follies.
- *Therefore*, I recommend that you sign the grievance petition.

Simple enumeration (*first, second, third*) can also point out relationships between ideas and provide transitions.

One type of signpost that can occasionally backfire and do more harm than good is one that signals the end of a speech. *Finally* and *in conclusion* give the audience implicit permission to stop listening, and they often do. If the speech has been too long or has otherwise not gone well, the audience may even express their relief audibly.

Better strategies for moving into a conclusion include repeating a key word or phrase, using a synonym or pronoun that refers to a previous idea, offering a final summary, or referring to the introduction of the speech. We will discuss the final summary in more detail later in this chapter.

Internal previews and summaries, which we will discuss shortly, are yet another way to provide verbal transitions from one point to the next in your speech. They have the additional advantage of repeating your main ideas, thereby enabling audience members to understand and remember them.

As summarized in Table 8.1, repetition of key words or ideas, the use of transitional words or phrases, enumeration, and internal previews and summaries all provide verbal transitions from one idea to the next. You might need to experiment with

several alternatives before you find the smooth transition you seek in a given instance. If none of these alternatives seems to work well, consider a nonverbal transition.

TABLE 8.1 *Verbal Transitions*

Strategy	Example
Repeating a key word or phrase or using a synonym pronoun that refers to an earlier key word or phrase	"*These problems* cannot be allowed to continue."
Using a transitional word or phrase	"*In addition* to the facts that I've mentioned, we need to consider one other problem."
Enumerating	"*Second*, there has been a rapid increase in the number of accidents reported."
Using an internal summary and preview	"*Now that we have discussed the problems* caused by illiteracy, *let's look at possible solutions.*"

Nonverbal Transitions Nonverbal transitions can occur in several ways, sometimes alone and sometimes in combination with verbal transitions. A change in facial expression, a pause, an altered vocal pitch or speaking rate, or a movement may indicate a transition.

For example, a speaker talking about the value of cardiopulmonary resuscitation began his speech with a powerful anecdote about a man who suffered a heart attack at a party. No one knew how to help, and the man died. The speaker then looked up from his notes and paused while maintaining eye contact with his audience. His next words were "The real tragedy of Bill Jorgen's death was that it should not have happened." His pause, as well as the words that followed, indicated a transition into the body of the speech. Like this speaker, most good speakers use a combination of verbal and nonverbal transitions to move from one point to another through their speeches.

Previews

As its name indicates, a *preview* is a statement of what is to come. Previews help to ensure that audience members will first anticipate and later remember the important points of a speech. Like transitions, previews help to provide coherence.

Initial Previews We introduced the preview statement in Chapter 6. It is a statement of what the main ideas of the speech will be, and it is usually presented in conjunction with the central idea as a blueprint for the speech, at or near the end of the introduction. Speaking on illiteracy among athletes, Melody offers the following blueprint at the end of her introduction:

> Illiteracy among athletes must be stopped. In order to fully grasp the significance of this problem, we will look at the root of it, and then move to [its] effects, and finally, we will look at the solution.[15]

In this blueprint, Melody clearly previews her main ideas and introduces them in the order in which she will discuss them in the body of the speech.

Sometimes speakers enumerate their main ideas to identify them even more clearly:

> To solve this issue, we must first examine the problem itself. Second, we'll analyze the causes of the problem, and finally we'll turn to a number of solutions to the problem of children in the diet culture.[16]

Notice that both of the preceding examples consist of two sentences. A preview statement need not be one long, rambling sentence.

Internal Previews In addition to using previews near the beginning of their speeches, speakers also use them at various points throughout. These **internal previews** introduce and outline ideas that will be developed as the speech progresses. Internal previews also serve as transitions. The following speaker, for example, has just discussed the dangers associated with organic farming. She then provides this transitional preview into her next point:

> Having seen the dangers of our anti-pesticide attitude, we can now look to some solutions to stop the trend toward organic foods.[17]

Having heard this preview, her listeners expect her next to discuss solutions to the problems associated with organic farming. Their anticipation increases the likelihood that they will later remember the information.

Questions as Internal Previews Sometimes speakers couch internal previews in the form of questions they plan to answer. Note how the question in this example provides an internal preview:

> Now that we know about the problem of hotel security and some of its causes and impacts, the question remains, what can we do, as potential travelers and potential victims, to protect ourselves?[18]

Just as anticipating an idea helps audience members to remember it, so mentally answering a question helps them to plant the answer firmly in their minds.

Summaries

Like previews, summaries provide additional exposure to a speaker's ideas and can help to ensure that audience members will grasp and remember them.

Final Summary A final summary occurs just before the end of a speech, often doing double duty as a transition between the body and the conclusion. The final summary is

the opposite of the preview statement. The preview statement gives audience members their first exposure to a speaker's main ideas; the final summary gives them their last exposure to those ideas. Here is an example of a final summary from a speech on the U.S. Customs Service:

> Today, we have focused on the failing U.S. Customs Service. We have asked several important questions, such as "Why is Customs having such a hard time doing its job?" and "What can we do to remedy this situation?" When the cause of a serious problem is unknown, the continuation of the dilemma is understandable. However, the cause for the failure of the U.S. Customs Service is known: a lack of personnel. Given that fact and our understanding that Customs is vital to America's interests, it would be foolish not to rectify this situation.[19]

This final summary leaves no doubt as to the important points of the speech. We discuss the use of final summaries in more detail in Chapter 10.

Internal Summaries

Internal summaries, as their name suggests, occur within and throughout a speech. They are often used after two or three points have been discussed, to keep those points fresh in the minds of the audience as the speech progresses. Susan uses this internal summary in her speech on the teacher shortage:

> So let's review for just a moment. One, we are endeavoring to implement educational reforms; but two, we are in the first years of a dramatic increase in enrollment; and three, fewer quality students are opting for education; while four, many good teachers want out of teaching; plus five, large numbers will soon be retiring.[20]

Like internal previews, internal summaries can help to provide transitions. In fact, internal summaries are often used in combination with internal previews to form transitions between major points and ideas, as in the following example:

> Now that we've seen how radon can get into our homes, let's take a look at some of the effects that it can have on our health once it begins to build.[21]

QUICK CHECK

Types of Signposts

- Verbal transitions
- Nonverbal transitions
- Preview statements
- Internal previews
- Final summaries
- Internal summaries

8.e Supplementing Signposts with Presentation Aids

Transitions, summaries, and previews are the glue that holds a speech together. Such signposts can help you to achieve a coherent flow of ideas and help your audience to remember those ideas. Unfortunately, you cannot guarantee that your audience will be attentive to your signposts. It is possible for your listeners to be so distracted by internal or external noise that they fail to hear or process even your most carefully planned verbal signposts.

One way in which you can increase the likelihood of your listeners' attending to your signposting is to prepare and use presentation aids to supplement your signposts. For example, you could display on an overhead transparency a bulleted or numbered outline of your main ideas as you initially preview them in your introduction and again as you summarize them in your conclusion. Some speakers like to use one transparency or PowerPoint slide for each main point. Transitions between points are emphasized as the speaker displays the next transparency or slide.

In Chapter 14, we discuss guidelines for developing and using such presentation aids. Especially if your speech is long or its organization is complex, you can help your audience to remember your organization if you provide visual support for your signposts.

STUDY GUIDE

Remember These Main Ideas

- Speeches are organized for audiences, with the speaker keeping in mind at all times the unique needs, interests, and expectations of the particular audience.
- Five common patterns of organization are topical, chronological, spatial, causal, and problem–solution.
- If your central idea has natural divisions, you can organize your speech topically.
- If your topic is controversial, you might want to organize your main ideas according to the principle of primacy, or putting the most important or convincing idea first.
- If you want to emphasize one point more than the others, consider the principle of recency. Audiences tend to remember best what they hear last.
- If your main points range from simple to complicated, arrange them in order of complexity, progressing from the simple to the more complex.
- Chronological organization is organization by time—from earliest to most recent (forward in time) or from recent events back into history (backward in time).
- Use spatial organization to arrange items according to their location and direction.
- Use cause and effect to identify a situation and then discuss the effects that result from it (cause → effect). Or you can present a situation and then discuss its causes (effect → cause).
- To emphasize how best to solve a problem, use a problem–solution pattern of organization.
- Main ideas are often subdivided. Organize subpoints so that audience members can readily grasp, understand, and remember them. You can arrange your main ideas according to one pattern and your subpoints according to another.
- Integrate your supporting material into your speech. It may help to begin by cutting and pasting text from a word-processing file or by putting all main points, subpoints, and supporting material on note cards and then arranging those cards in order. If your supporting material has been photocopied, search the copies for what you need, and then write or type the material into your speech plan.
- Incorporate the supporting material smoothly into your speech. One strategy involves (1) stating the point, (2) citing the source, (3) presenting the supporting material, and (4) explaining how the supporting material substantiates or develops the point.

- When you have more than one piece of supporting material for a main idea or subpoint, you can organize the supporting material according to one of the five common patterns. If none of the five standard organizational patterns seem suited to your supporting materials, you might want to try one or more of these strategies: (1) primacy or recency, (2) specificity, (3) complexity, or (4) soft to hard evidence.
- Signposts can help you to communicate your organization to your audience.
- Transitions indicate that a speaker has finished discussing one idea and is moving to another. Transitions may be either verbal or nonverbal.
- Preview statements and internal previews help to ensure that audience members will first anticipate and later remember the important points of a speech.
- Internal summaries and final summaries provide additional exposure to a speaker's ideas and can help to ensure that audience members will grasp and remember them.
- Presentation aids increase the likelihood that your listeners will attend to your signposting.

Understand These Key Terms

cause and effect organization (p. 177)
chronological organization (p. 175)
complexity (p. 175)
disposition (p. 172)
hard evidence (p. 184)
internal preview (p. 188)
internal summary (p. 189)
primacy (p. 173)
problem–solution organization (p. 178)
recency (p. 174)
signpost (p. 186)
soft evidence (p. 184)
spatial organization (p. 184)
topical organization (p. 173)

Think about These Questions

- Identify the organizational pattern that is used for the main ideas of this speech. Do you think the speaker also considered primacy, recency, or complexity? If so, which one?

Purpose statement:	At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to explain three theories about what happened to the dinosaurs.
Central idea:	There are at least three distinct theories about what happened to the dinosaurs
Main ideas:	I. A large asteroid hit the earth.
	II. A gradual climate shift occurred.
	III. The level of oxygen in the atmosphere gradually changed.

- The principles of primacy and recency are referred to several times in this chapter. If a speaker has a statistic that offers overwhelming evidence of the severity of a given problem, is it ethical for the speaker to save that statistic for last, or should the speaker reveal immediately to the audience how severe the problem is? In other words, is there an ethical distinction between primacy and recency? Discuss your answer.

Learn More Online

MySpeechLab Visit this site for additional suggestions for organizing your speech. You can also read transcripts and listen to recordings of speeches that apply the patterns that were discussed in this chapter.
www.myspeechlab.com (access code required)

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Introducing Your Speech 9

"The average person thinks about what he has said; the above average person about what he is going to say."

—Anonymous

OUTLINE

9.a Purposes of Introductions
- Get the Audience's Attention
- Give the Audience a Reason to Listen
- Introduce the Subject
- Establish Your Credibility
- Preview Your Main Ideas

9.b Effective Introductions
- Illustrations or Anecdotes
- Startling Facts or Statistics
- Quotations
- Humor
- Questions
- References to Historical Events
- References to Recent Events
- Personal References
- References to the Occasion
- References to Preceding Speeches

Like all teachers, public speaking instructors have pet peeves when it comes to their students' work. Of pet peeves that public speaking teachers identified in a recent study, more than 25 percent relate to introductions and conclusions. Peeves about introductions include the following:

- Beginning a speech with "OK, ah . . ."
- Apologizing or making excuses at the beginning of the speech for not being prepared
- Beginning a speech with "Hello, my speech is on . . ."
- Beginning a speech with a question ("How many of you . . .?")[1]

Of course, not every public speaking instructor considers all of the above pet peeves or even necessarily tactics to be avoided. But the fact that they appear on this list at all suggests that you will probably want to consider alternatives. After all, your introduction provides your listeners with an important first impression of both you and your speech.

Like many speakers, you might think that the first task in preparing a speech is to start drafting your introduction. Actually, the introduction is more often the last part of the speech you develop. A key purpose of your introduction is to provide an overview of your message. How can you do that until you know what the message is going to be? You should organize your speech before you craft the introduction. In Chapter 8, we discussed patterns and strategies for organizing the body of your speech; using appropriate transitions, previews, and summaries should precede the crafting of the introduction to your speech. In this chapter, we will further explore organization by discussing introductions.

9.a Purposes of Introductions

Within a few seconds of meeting a person, you form a first impression that is often quite lasting. So, too, do you form a first impression of a speaker and his or her message within the opening seconds of a speech. The introduction may convince you to listen carefully because this is a credible speaker presenting a well-prepared speech, or it may send the message that the speaker is ill-prepared and the message is not worth your time.

In a ten-minute speech, the introduction will probably last no more than a minute and a half. To say that the introduction needs to be well planned is an understatement, considering how important and yet how brief this portion of any speech is.

As a speaker, your task is to ensure that your introduction convinces your audience to listen to you. Specifically, a good introduction must perform five important functions:

- Get the audience's attention
- Give the audience a reason to listen
- Introduce the subject
- Establish your credibility
- Preview your main ideas

Let's examine each of these five functions in more detail.

Get the Audience's Attention

A key purpose of the introduction is to gain favorable attention for your speech. Because listeners form their first impressions of the speech quickly, if the introduction does not capture their attention and cast the speech in a favorable light, the rest of the speech may be wasted on them. The speaker who walks to the podium and drones, "Today I am going to talk to you about…" has probably lost most of the audience in those first few boring words. Some specific ways to gain the attention of audiences will be discussed later in this chapter.

We emphasize *favorable* attention for a very good reason. It is possible to gain an audience's attention but, in so doing, to alienate them or disgust them so that they become irritated instead of interested in what you have to say. For example, a student began a pro-life speech with a graphic description of the abortion process. She caught her audience's attention but made them so uncomfortable that they could hardly concentrate on the rest of her speech.

Another student gave a speech on the importance of donating blood. Without a word, he began by savagely slashing his wrists in front of his stunned audience. As blood spurted, audience members screamed, and one fainted. The blood was real blood, but it wasn't his. The speaker worked at a blood bank, and he was using the bank's blood. He had placed a device under each arm that allowed him to pump out the blood as if from his wrists. He certainly captured his audience's attention! But they never heard his message. The shock and disgust of seeing such a display made that impossible. He did not gain favorable attention.

The moral of our two tales: By all means, be creative in your speech introductions. But also use common sense in deciding how best to gain the favorable attention of your audience members. Alienating them is even worse than boring them.

Give the Audience a Reason to Listen

Even after you have captured the attention of your audience members, you have to give them some reason to want to listen to the rest of your speech. An unmotivated listener quickly tunes out. You can help to establish listening motivation by showing the members of your audience how the topic affects them directly.

In Chapter 7, we presented six criteria for determining which supporting material is best. One of those criteria was *proximity*, the degree to which the information affects your listeners directly. Just as proximity is important to supporting materials, it is important to speech introductions. "This concerns me" is a powerful reason to listen. Notice how Chandra involves her audience members in her speech on the hepatitis C risk that is inherent in tattooing:

> If you're one of the millions wanting to show your patriotism by getting a star-spangled banner tattooed across your back, ask questions regarding its potential risks.[2]

Sheena uses proximity to motivate her audience to empathize with people who suffer from exposure to toxic mold:

> Headaches, fatigue, dizziness, and memory impairment seem like ailments that each person in this room has had at one point, right? You stay up late cramming for an exam. The next day, you are fatigued, dizzy, and cannot remember the answers.[3]

It does not matter so much how or when you demonstrate proximity. But it is essential that, like Chandra and Sheena, you do at some point establish that your topic is of vital personal concern to your listeners.

Introduce the Subject

Perhaps the most obvious purpose of an introduction is to introduce the subject of a speech. Within a few seconds after you begin your speech, the audience should have a pretty good idea of what you are going to talk about. Do not get so carried away with jokes or illustrations that you forget this basic purpose. Few things will frustrate your audience more than having to wait until halfway through your speech to figure out what you are talking about! The best way to ensure that your introduction does indeed introduce the subject of your speech is to include a statement of your central idea in the introduction. For example, in introducing his speech on the needs of the aged, this speaker immediately established his subject and central idea:

> If you take away just one thing from what I have to say, I hope you'll come to understand in the next few minutes that the exploding population of seniors demands a conscious, considered, and collaborative response to plan for the health, financial, and social implications of an older population.[4]

Establish Your Credibility

A credible speaker is one whom the audience judges to be a believable authority and a competent speaker. A credible speaker is also someone the audience believes they can trust. We stress here that as you begin your speech, you should be mindful of your listeners' attitudes toward you. Ask yourself, "Why should they listen to me? What is my background with respect to the topic? Am I personally committed to the issues about which I am going to speak?"

Many people have so much admiration for a political or religious figure, an athlete, or an entertainer that they sacrifice time, energy, and money to hear these celebrities speak. When the Pope travels abroad, people travel great distances and stand for hours in extreme heat or cold to celebrate Mass with him. But ordinary people cannot take their own credibility for granted when they speak. If you can establish your credibility early in a speech, it will help to motivate your audience to listen. The How To box suggests two ways to establish your credibility during the introduction of your speech.

HOW TO

Establish Your Credibility

Two strategies can help you to establish credibility with your audience:

- *Be well prepared for your speech, and appear confident.* Speaking fluently while maintaining eye contact does much to convey a sense of confidence. If you seem to have confidence in yourself, your audience will have confidence in you.
- *Tell the audience of your personal experience with your topic.* Instead of considering you boastful, most audience members will listen to you with respect when they know that you are speaking with the expertise that stems from personal experience.

Preview Your Main Ideas

A final purpose of the introduction is to preview the main ideas of your speech. As you saw in Chapter 8, the preview statement usually comes near the end of the introduction, included in or immediately following a statement of the central idea. The preview statement allows your listeners to anticipate the main ideas of your speech, which in turn helps to ensure that they will remember those ideas after the speech.

As we also noted in Chapter 8, a preview statement is an organizational strategy called a *signpost*. Just as signs posted along a highway tell you what is coming up, a signpost in your speech tells the listeners what to expect by enumerating the ideas or points that you plan to present. If you were giving a speech about racial profiling, for example, you might say:

> To end these crimes against color, we must first paint an accurate picture of the problem, then explore the causes, and finally establish solutions that will erase the practice of racial profiling.[5]

Identifying your main ideas helps to organize the message and enhances listeners' learning.

The introduction to your speech, then, should get your audience's attention, give the audience a reason to listen, introduce the subject, establish your credibility, and preview your main ideas. All this—and brevity too—might seem impossible to achieve. But it isn't!

QUICK CHECK

Does Your Introduction Accomplish Its Purpose?

Does Your Introduction . . .	To Make Sure It Does . . .
Get the audience's attention?	Use an illustration, a startling fact or statistic, a quotation, humor, a question, a reference to an historical event or to a recent event, a personal reference, a reference to the occasion, or a reference to a preceding speech.
Give the audience a reason to listen?	Tell your listeners how the topic directly affects them.

(*continued*)

(*continued*)	
Introduce the subject?	Present your central idea to your audience.
Establish your credibility?	Offer your credentials. Tell your listeners about your commitment to your topic.
Preview your main ideas?	Tell your audience what you are going to tell them.

9.b Effective Introductions

With a little practice, you will be able to write satisfactory central ideas and preview statements. It may be more difficult to gain your audience members' attention and give them a reason to listen to you.

Fortunately, there are several effective methods for developing speech introductions. Not every method is appropriate for every speech, but chances are that you can discover among these alternatives at least one type of introduction to fit the topic and purpose of your speech, whatever they might be. We will discuss ten ways of introducing a speech:

- Illustrations or anecdotes
- Startling facts or statistics
- Quotations
- Humor
- Questions
- References to historical events
- References to recent events
- Personal references
- References to the occasion
- References to preceding speeches

Illustrations or Anecdotes

Not surprisingly, because it is the most inherently interesting type of supporting material, an illustration or **anecdote**, a brief story that is often based on fact, can provide the basis for an effective speech introduction. In fact, if you have an especially compelling illustration that you had planned to use in the body of the speech, you might do well to use it in your introduction instead. A relevant and interesting anecdote will introduce your subject and almost invariably gain an audience's attention.

Student speaker Matt opened his speech on the dangers associated with the chemical BPA with this extended illustration:

> Three years ago Algeta McDonald's life was taken by breast cancer. She was an absolutely amazing Italian-American woman, who was completely stubborn, but she always

brought out the best in anyone she was around. Here was a woman who always ate proper foods and was conscientious of her health in general, every day of her life.

As anyone who knew her well what their favorite memory of Algeta was, and I can almost guarantee it's of her carrying around a bright red Nalgene water bottle. This way, she could get her 64 daily ounces of water with certainty. Unfortunately, this happy memory of how she always had her water bottle might change with some information that has come to light recently.[6]

Matt's story effectively captured the attention of his audience and introduced the subject of his speech.

Startling Facts or Statistics

A second method of introducing a speech is to use a startling fact or statistic. Startling an audience with the extent of a situation or problem invariably catches its members' attention and motivates them to listen further as well as helping them to remember afterward what you had to say. Merry's audience must have come to attention quickly when they heard the following statistics in her introduction:*

> The August 28, 2008, *Globe and Mail* estimates that the United States spend three billion dollars each year on cancer research, while the *LA Times* of February 16, 2009, reports the costs of cancer care are increasing by 15% annually—nearly three times the rate of other health care.[7]

Quotations

Using an appropriate quotation to introduce a speech is a common practice. Often, another writer or speaker has expressed an opinion on your topic that is more authoritative, comprehensive, or memorable than what you can say. Terrika opened her speech on the importance of community with a quotation from poet Johari Kungufu:

> Sisters, Men
> What are we doin?
> What about the babies, our children?
> When we was real we never had orphans or children in joints.
> Come spirits
> drive out the nonsense from our minds and the crap from our dreams
> make us remember what we need, that children are the next life.
> bring us back to the real
> bring us back to the real
>
> "The Real." Johari Kungufu, in her poem, specifically alludes to a time in African history when children were not confused about who they were.[8]

A different kind of quotation, this one from an expert, was chosen by another speaker to introduce the topic of the disappearance of childhood in America:

*"Beyond Ribbons and Wristbands: An Honest Approach to Cancer Activism" by Meredith Regan, Speech for University of Texas Individual Events, Spring 2010. Copyright 2010 by Meredith Regan. Reprinted with permission.

> As a distinctive childhood culture wastes away, we watch with fascination and dismay." This insight of Neil Postman, author of *Disappearance of Childhood*, raised a poignant point. Childhood in America is vanishing.[9]

Because the expert was not widely recognized, the speaker included a brief statement of his qualifications. This authority "said it in a nutshell": He expressed in concise language the central idea of the speech.

Although a quote can effectively introduce a speech, do not fall into the lazy habit of turning to a collection of quotations every time you need an introduction. There are so many other interesting, and sometimes better, ways to introduce a speech that quotes should be used only if they are extremely interesting, compelling, or very much to the point.

Like the methods of organization discussed in an earlier chapter, methods of introduction are not mutually exclusive. Very often, two or three are effectively combined in a single introduction. For example, Thad combined a quotation and an illustration for this effective introduction to a speech on the funeral industry:

> "Dying is a very dull, dreary affair. And my advice to you is to have nothing whatsoever to do with it." These lingering words by British playwright Somerset Maugham were meant to draw a laugh. Yet the ironic truth to the statement has come to epitomize the grief of many, including Jan Berman of Martha's Vineyard. In a recent interview with National Public Radio, we learn that Ms. Berman desired to have a home funeral for her mother. She possessed a burial permit and was legally within her rights. But when a local funeral director found out, he lied to her, telling her that what she was doing was illegal.[10]

Humor

Humor, handled well, can be a wonderful attention-getter. It can help to relax your audience and win their goodwill for the rest of the speech. University of Texas Professor of Journalism Marvin Olasky told this humorous story to open a speech on disaster response:

> Let me begin with a Texas story about how officials do offer help. It starts with a mom on a farm looking out the window. She sees the family cow munching on grass and her daughter talking with a strange man. The mom furiously yells out the window, "Didn't I tell you not to talk to strangers? You come in this house right now." The girl offers a protest: "But mama, this man says he's a United States senator." The wise mother replies, "In that case, come in this house right now, and bring the cow in with you."
>
> Let's talk about responses to disaster.[11]

Another speaker used humor to express appreciation for being invited to speak to a group by beginning his speech with this story:

> Three corporate executives were trying to define the word fame.
>
> One said, "Fame is getting invited to the White House to see the President."
>
> The second one said, "Fame is being invited to the White House and while you are visiting, the phone rings and he doesn't answer it."

The third executive said, "You're both wrong. Fame is being invited to the White House to visit with the President when his Hot Line rings. He answers it, listens a minute, and then says, 'Here, it's for you!"'

Being asked to speak today is like being in the White House and the call's for me.[12]

Subtle Humor Humor need not always be the slapstick comedy of the Three Stooges. It does not even have to be a joke. It may take more subtle forms, such as irony or incredulity. When General Douglas MacArthur, an honor graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, returned to West Point in 1962, he delivered his now-famous "Farewell to the Cadets." He opened that speech with this humorous anecdote:

> As I was leaving the hotel this morning, a doorman asked me, "Where are you bound for, General?" And when I replied, "West Point," he remarked, "Beautiful place. Have you ever been there before?"[13]

MacArthur's brief story caught the audience's attention and made them laugh—in short, it was an effective way to open the speech.

Humor and Diversity If your audience is linguistically diverse or composed primarily of listeners whose first language is not English, you might want to choose an introduction strategy other than humor. Because much humor is created by verbal plays on words, people who do not speak English as their native language might not perceive the humor in an anecdote or quip that you intended to be funny. And humor rarely translates well. Former President Jimmy Carter recalls speaking at a university near Kyoto, Japan, and being startled by unexpectedly hearty laughter in response to a short humorous anecdote he related. When he later asked his interpreter how he had translated the story so successfully, the interpreter finally admitted sheepishly, "I told them, 'President Carter has just told a funny story. Everyone laugh.'"[14]

Just as certain audiences may preclude your use of a humorous introduction, so may certain subjects—for example, sudden infant death syndrome or rape. Used with discretion, however, humor can provide a lively, interesting, and appropriate introduction for many speeches.

Questions

Remember the pet peeves listed at the beginning of this chapter? One of them was "Beginning a speech with a question ('How many of you . . . ?')." The problem is not so much the strategy itself, but the lack of mindfulness in the "How many of you . . . ?" phrasing. A thoughtful **rhetorical question**, by contrast, which is intended to provoke thought rather than to elicit an answer, can encourage your listeners' mental participation in your introduction, getting their attention and giving them a reason to listen. President and CEO of Coca-Cola, Muhtar Kent, began a speech to investors and financial analysts by asking,

> Are we ready for tomorrow, today?[15]

And Richard opened his speech on teenage suicide with this simple question:

> Have you ever been alone in the dark?[16]

Delivering Your Question To turn questions into an effective introduction, the speaker must do more than just think of good questions to ask. He or she must also deliver the questions effectively. The How To box offers you some delivery tips.

HOW TO

Deliver an Opening Question

- *Use a pause.* Pause briefly after each question so that audience members have time to try to formulate a mental answer. After all, the main advantage of questions as an introductory technique is to hook the audience by getting them to engage in a mental dialogue with you.
- *Use eye contact.* One effective method is to look down at your notes while you ask the question but then reestablish eye contact with listeners. Establishing eye contact with your audience following a question provides additional motivation for them to think of an answer.

Responding to Audience Responses Although it does not happen frequently, an audience member might blurt out a vocal response to a question that was intended to be rhetorical. If you plan to open a speech with a rhetorical question, be aware of this possibility and plan possible appropriate reactions. If the topic is light, a Jay Leno–style return quip can win over the audience and turn the interruption into an asset. If the topic is more serious or the interruption is inappropriate or contrary to what you expected, you might reply with something like "Perhaps most of the rest of you were thinking . . . ," or you might answer the question yourself.

Using Questions with Other Introduction Methods Questions are commonly combined with another method of introduction. For example, University of Akron president Luis Proenza opened a speech on new strategies for success in higher education with a question followed by a startling statistic:

> What if the airplane had advanced as far and as fast as the computer? Today's jumbo jet would carry one hundred thousand passengers, and it would fly them to the moon and back for $12.50 at 23,400 miles per hour.[17]

Either by themselves or in tandem with another method of introduction, questions can provide effective openings for speeches. Like quotations, however, questions can also be crutches for speakers who have not taken the time to explore other options. Unless you can think of a truly engaging question, work to develop one of the other introduction strategies.

References to Historical Events

What American is not familiar with the opening line of Lincoln's classic Gettysburg Address: "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal"? Note that Lincoln's famous opening sentence refers to the historical

context of the speech. You, too, may find a way to begin a speech by making a reference to a historic event.

Every day is the anniversary of something. Perhaps you could begin a speech by drawing a relationship between a historic event that happened on this day and your speech objective.

Executive speechwriter Cynthia Starks illustrated this strategy in a February 16, 2010 speech:*

> On this date—Feb. 16, 1923—archeologist Howard Carter entered the burial chamber of King Tutankhamen. There he found a solid gold coffin, Tut's intact mummy, and priceless treasures.
>
> On Feb. 16, 1959, Fidel Castro took over the Cuban government 45 days after overthrowing Fulgencio Batista.
>
> And America's first 9-1-1 emergency phone system went live in Haleyville, Alabama, on Feb. 16, 1968.
>
> Today, I won't be revealing priceless treasures. I promise not to overthrow anyone, or generate any 9-1-1 calls. But I do hope to reveal a few speechwriting secrets, provide a little revolutionary thinking and a sense of urgency about the speeches you ought to be giving.[18]

How do you discover anniversaries of historic events? You could consult "This Day in History" (www.history.com/this-day-in-history) or download a "This Day in History" app for the iPhone or iPad.

References to Recent Events

If your topic is timely, a reference to a recent event can be a good way to open your speech. An opening taken from a recent news story can take the form of an illustration, a startling statistic, or even a quotation, giving you the additional advantages discussed under each of those methods of introduction. Moreover, referring to a recent event increases your credibility by showing that you are knowledgeable about current affairs.

"Recent" does not necessarily mean a story that broke just last week or even last month. An event that occurred within the past year or so can be considered recent. Even a particularly significant event that is slightly older can qualify. The key, says one speaker,

> is to avoid being your grandfather. No more stories about walking uphill both ways to school with a musket on your back and seventeen Redcoats chasing you. Be in the now, and connect with your audience.[19]

Personal References

A reference to yourself can take several forms. You might express appreciation or pleasure at having been asked to speak, as did this speaker:

> I would like, if I may, to start on a brief personal note. It is a great pleasure for me to be speaking in Cleveland, Ohio. This is where I grew up. Since then, I have traveled all over the world, but I have never stopped missing Ohio.[20]

*"How to Write a Speech," by Cynthia J. Starks. Copyright © 2010 by Cynthia J. Starks. Reprinted by permission.

Or you might share a personal experience, as did this speaker:

> Like some of you in the audience, I've held many jobs before finding my rue calling, from washing cars to waiting tables and taking care of animals . . . [21]

Although personal references take a variety of forms, what they do best, in all circumstances, is to establish a bond between you and your audience.

References to the Occasion

References to the occasion are often made at weddings, birthday parties, dedication ceremonies, and other such events. For example, when then First Lady Laura Bush spoke at a White House Salute to America's Authors, she opened her remarks this way:

> Good afternoon. Welcome to the "White House Salute to America's Authors." This program, the second in a series on American authors, celebrates one of the richest literary periods in American history, the Harlem Renaissance, and the authors whose genius brought it to life.[22]

The reference to the occasion can also be combined with other methods of introduction, such as an illustration or a rhetorical question.

References to Preceding Speeches

If your speech is one of several being presented on the same occasion, such as in a speech class, at a symposium, or as part of a lecture series, you will usually not know until shortly before your own speech what other speakers will say. Few experiences will make your stomach sink faster than hearing a speaker just ahead of you speak on your topic. Worse still, that speaker might even use some of the same supporting materials you had planned to use. When this happens, you must decide on the spot whether referring to one of these previous speeches will be better than using the introduction that you originally prepared. It might be wise to refer to a preceding speech when another speaker has spoken on a topic that is so related to your own that you can draw an analogy. In a sense, your introduction becomes a transition from that earlier speech to yours. Here is an example of an introduction delivered by a fast-thinking student speaker under those circumstances:

> When Juli talked to us about her experiences as a lifeguard, she stressed that the job was not as glamorous as many of us imagine. Today I want to tell you about another job that appears to be more glamorous than it is—a job that I have held for two years. I am a bartender at the Rathskeller.[23]

In summary, as you plan your introduction, remember that any combination of the methods just discussed is possible. With a little practice, you will become confident in choosing from several good possibilities as you prepare your introduction.

QUICK CHECK

Effective Introductions

- Use an illustration or anecdote.
- Present startling facts or statistics.
- Use an appropriate quotation.
- Use humor.
- Begin with a rhetorical question.
- Refer to historical events.
- Refer to recent events.
- Use personal references.
- Refer to the occasion.
- Refer to preceding speeches.

STUDY GUIDE

Remember These Main Ideas

- A good introduction gets the audience's attention, gives the audience a reason to listen, introduces your subject, establishes your credibility, and previews your main ideas.
- Use common sense in deciding how best to gain the favorable attention of your audience.
- Give the audience a reason to listen by showing them how the topic affects them directly.
- You can introduce your subject and preview the body of your speech by including your central idea and preview statement in the introduction.
- Establish your credibility early in your speech by being well prepared and confident or by describing your personal experience with the topic.
- There are many effective ways of introducing a speech. You can use one or a combination of the following: illustrations or anecdotes, startling facts or statistics, quotations, humor, questions, references to historical events, references to recent events, personal references, references to the occasion, or references to preceding speeches, if there are any.
- If your audience is linguistically diverse or composed primarily of listeners whose first language is not English, you might want to choose a strategy other than humor.
- Don't always rely on quotations and questions. When you do open with a question, ask a rhetorical question—the kind you don't expect an answer to.

Understand These Key Terms

anecdote (p. 200)

rhetorical question (p. 203)

Think about These Questions

- Describe how you could establish a motivation for your classroom audience to listen to you on each of the following topics: cholesterol, Elvis Presley, the history of greeting cards, ozone depletion, text messaging, speed traps.
- Nakai is planning to give his informative speech on Native American music, displaying and demonstrating the use of such instruments as the flute, the Taos drum, and the Yaqui rain stick. How should he introduce his speech?
- Marty and Shanna are in the same section of a public-speaking class. Marty has discovered an illustration that he thinks will make an effective introduction.

When he tells Shanna about it, she thinks it would also make a great introduction for her own speech, which is on a different topic. Shanna is scheduled to speak before Marty. She badly wants to use the introductory illustration that Marty has discovered. Is it ethical for her to do so if she cites the original source of the illustration in her speech?

Learn More Online

Don't always rely on quotations for your introduction, but when you need one, check out the following sites:

Bartelby
www.bartelby.com

Quote World
www.quoteworld.org

Yahoo's directory of humorous quotations
http://dir.yahoo.com/reference/ quotations/humorous

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Concluding Your Speech 10

"A hard beginning maketh a good ending."

—John Heywood

OUTLINE

10.a Purposes of Conclusions
Summarize the Speech
Provide Closure

10.b Effective Conclusions
Methods Also Used for Introductions
References to the Introduction
Inspirational Appeals or Challenges

Just as most fireworks displays end with a grand finale, your speech should end not necessarily with fireworks, but with a conclusion worthy of your well-crafted message. An effective conclusion is as vital to achieving your communication goal as an introduction is. Your introduction creates an important first impression; your conclusion leaves an equally important final impression.

Unfortunately, many speakers pay less attention to their conclusions than to any other part of their speeches. They believe that if they can get through the first 90 percent of a speech, they will think of some way to conclude it. Perhaps you have had the experience of listening to a speaker who failed to plan a conclusion. Awkward final seconds of stumbling for words may be followed by hesitant applause from an audience that is not even sure the speech is over. It is hardly the best way to leave people who came to listen to you.

Just as you learned ways to introduce a speech, you can learn how to conclude one. We begin by considering the purposes of conclusions and go on to explore methods to help you achieve those purposes.

10.a Purposes of Conclusions

An effective conclusion will serve two purposes: It will summarize the speech, and it will provide closure. Compare your speech to a television commercial. The closing seconds of a commercial are just as important as the opening seconds. The closing seconds repeat the name of the product or service, summarize its virtues, and often suggest where you can purchase it. Long after you have finished speaking, your audience is likely to remember the effect, if not the content, of your closing remarks.

Summarize the Speech

A conclusion is a speaker's last chance to review his or her main ideas for the audience.

Reemphasize the Central Idea in a Memorable Way The conclusions of a number of famous speeches are among the most memorable statements we have. For example, General Douglas MacArthur's farewell to the nation at the end of his career concluded with these memorable words:

> "Old soldiers never die; they just fade away." And like the old soldier of that ballad, I now close my military career and just fade away—an old soldier who tried to do his duty as God gave him the light to see that duty. Good-bye.[1]

Likewise, when New York Yankees legend Lou Gehrig addressed his fans on July 4, 1939, in an emotional farewell to a baseball career cut short by a diagnosis of ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), he concluded with this memorable line:

> I may have had a tough break, but I have an awful lot to live for.[2]

But memorable endings are not the exclusive property of great orators. With practice, most people can prepare similarly effective conclusions. Chapter 12 offers ideas for using language to make your statements more memorable. As a preliminary example

of the memorable use of language, here is how Noelle concluded her speech on phony academic institutions on the Internet:

> What we have learned from all this is that we, and only we, have the power to stop [fraudulent learning institutions]. So we don't get www.conned.[3]

This speaker's clever play on "dot.com" helped her audience remember her topic and central idea.

The end of your speech is your last chance to impress the central idea on your audience members. Do it in such a way that they cannot help but remember it.

Restate the Main Ideas In addition to reemphasizing the central idea of the speech, the conclusion is likely to restate the main ideas. Note how John effectively summarized the main ideas of his speech on emissions tampering, casting the summary as an expression of his fears about the problem and the actions that could ease those fears:

> I'm frightened. Frightened that nothing I could say would encourage the 25 percent of emissions-tampering Americans to change their ways and correct the factors that cause their autos to pollute disproportionately. Frightened that the American public will not respond to a crucial issue unless the harms are both immediate and observable. Frightened that the EPA will once again prove very sympathetic to industry. Three simple steps will alleviate my fear: inspection, reduction in lead content, and, most importantly, awareness.[4]

Most speakers summarize their speech in the first part of the conclusion or as part of the transition between the body of the speech and its conclusion.

Provide Closure

Probably the most obvious purpose of a conclusion is to bring **closure**—to cue the audience that the speech is coming to an end by making it "sound finished."

Use Verbal or Nonverbal Cues to Signal the End of the Speech As described in the How To box, you can use both verbal and nonverbal clues to let your audience know your speech is coming to its end.

HOW TO

Signal the End of Your Speech

Verbal cues

- Helpful transition phrases include *finally*, *for my last point*, and *in conclusion*.
- Be careful that your cues don't give the audience unspoken permission to tune out. Be quick to follow your transition with the final statement of your speech.

Nonverbal cues

- Pause between the body of your speech and its conclusion.
- Slow your speaking rate.
- Move out from behind a podium to make a final impassioned plea.
- Use a falling vocal inflection to signal your final statement.

Motivate the Audience to Respond Another way to provide closure to your speech is to motivate your audience to respond in some way. If your speech is persuasive, you might want your audience to take some sort of appropriate action: write a letter, buy a product, make a telephone call, or get involved in a cause. In fact, an *action step* is essential to the persuasive organizational strategy called the motivated sequence, which we discuss in Chapter 17.

At the close of her speech on negligent landlords, Melanie included a simple audience response as part of her action step:

> By a show of hands, how many people in this room rely on rental housing? Look around. It's a problem that affects us all, if not directly, then through a majority of our friends.[5]

Another speaker ended a speech to an audience of travel agents by recommending these specific action steps:

- Continuously develop and improve your professional and business skills.
- Embrace and utilize the new technologies. You are either riding on the new technology highway, or you are standing in the dust, left behind.
- Continuously build and strengthen your top industry organizations locally and nationally so their brands, endorsement, and influence can work powerfully on your behalf.
- Develop a passion for this business and inspire the same in your employees and coworkers.[6]

In both of the preceding examples, the speakers draw on the principle of proximity (introduced in Chapter 7) to motivate their audiences. If audience members feel that they are or could be personally involved or affected, they are more likely to respond to your message.

QUICK CHECK

Purposes of Your Speech Conclusion

Purpose	Technique
Summarize the speech	• Reemphasize the central idea in a memorable way. • Restate the main ideas.
Provide closure	• Signal the end of the speech verbally or nonverbally. • Motivate the audience to respond.

10.b Effective Conclusions

Methods Also Used for Introductions

Effective conclusions may employ any of the methods that are used for introductions, as discussed in Chapter 9. These include the following:

- *Illustrations or anecdotes.* An illustration or anecdote can provide the basis for an effective conclusion. It can help the audience to focus on the main point of your speech, and it can hold their attention. A personal illustration that is used in a conclusion will also reinforce your credibility.
- *Startling facts or statistics.* Startling facts and statistics can help your audience to remember afterward what you had to say.
- *Quotations.* Just as using an appropriate quotation to introduce a speech is a common practice, so too is using a quotation to conclude a speech, as in this commencement address by the musician Bono:

  > Remember what John Adams said about Ben Franklin: "He does not hesitate at our boldest measures but rather seems to think too irresolute."
  >
  > Well, this is the time for bold measures. This is the country, and you are the generation.[7]

- *Humor.* A humorous conclusion puts the audience in a relaxed frame of mind so that they leave with a sense of enjoyment of what you have told them and goodwill toward you as the speaker.
- *Questions.* Just as using a rhetorical question to open a speech focuses the audience's attention, using a rhetorical question in your conclusion keeps your speech in the audience's mind as they try to answer the question.

In addition, there are at least two other distinct ways of concluding a speech: with references to the introduction and with inspirational appeals or challenges.

References to the Introduction

Finishing a story, answering a rhetorical question, or reminding the audience of the startling fact or statistic you presented in the introduction is an excellent way to provide closure. Like bookends on either side of a group of books on your desk, a related introduction and conclusion provide unified support for the ideas in the middle.

In Chapter 9, you read the extended illustration Matt used to open his speech on the dangers associated with BPA. He concluded the speech by referring to that introduction:

> What would Algeta have said to me if I were to tell her that her healthy lifestyle would be the same reason that she would die one day? Well, she was my grandmother. I knew her very well, and she was completely stubborn, so she would have called me crazy . . . but today I'm going to let you decide what her answer should have been.[8]

Matt's conclusion alludes to his introduction to make his speech memorable, to motivate his audience to respond, and to provide closure.

Inspirational Appeals or Challenges

Another way to end your speech is to issue an inspirational appeal or challenge to your listeners, rousing them to a high emotional pitch at the conclusion of the speech. The conclusion becomes the climax. Speechwriter and communication consultant James W. Robinson explains why such conclusions can work well:

> It's almost as if, for a few brief moments [the audience members] escape from the stressful demands of our high-pressure world and welcome your gifts: insightful vision, persuasive rhetoric, a touch of philosophy, a little emotion, and yes, even a hint of corniness.[9]

One famous example of a concluding inspirational appeal comes from Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. You can read the stirring conclusion of Dr. King's speech in Appendix C.[10] That King's conclusion was both inspiring and memorable has been affirmed by the growing fame of that passage through the years since he delivered the speech.

In the conclusion of his investiture speech, Jake Schrum, president of Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, issued this unique and effective inspirational challenge to his listeners:

> Before I end my remarks, I invite all Southwestern alumni and all Southwestern students to stand and to remain standing for my final words.
>
> Years ago, I knew a woman named Audry Dillow who had been a schoolteacher all of her adult life. In her eighties when I met her, we often reflected on the attributes and beliefs of college students. Frankly, she was not as positive about the goodness of students as I was.
>
> One day, she asked me, "Jake, are there students today who truly care about someone other than themselves, who really care about the world, who are genuinely good at heart?" I said, "Yes." She said, "Who?" I said, "What do you mean, 'Who?"' She said, "Who—who are they? Give me their names."
>
> I said, "You want me to give you the actual names of people who will basically fight the world's fight?" She said, "Yes, I want names."
>
> If she were here today to ask me the same question, may I give her your name?
>
> The world is waiting for your reply.
>
> *Your answer will change the world.*[11]

King's and Schrum's inspiring conclusions reemphasized their central ideas in a memorable way, provided closure to their speeches, and inspired their listeners.

QUICK CHECK

Effective Conclusions

- Use any of the methods used for an effective introduction.
- Refer to the introduction of your speech.
- Issue an inspirational appeal or a challenge.

STUDY GUIDE

Remember These Main Ideas

- Concluding your speech well is just as important as introducing it well, for it is the conclusion that leaves the final impression.
- A conclusion should summarize your speech and provide closure.
- Techniques for summarizing the speech include reemphasizing the central idea in a memorable way and restating the main ideas.
- Ways to provide closure include signaling the end of your speech and motivating the audience to respond.
- Effective conclusions may employ illustrations, quotations, humor, or any of the other methods used for introductions.
- Referring to the introduction in your conclusion provides unified support for the ideas in the middle of your speech.
- Issue an inspirational appeal or challenge to your listeners at the conclusion of the speech, rousing them to a high emotional pitch.

Understand This Key Term

closure (p. 213)

Think about This Question

- Knowing that you have recently visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, your American history professor asks you to make a brief presentation to the class about the Wall: its history; its symbolic meaning; and its impact on the families, comrades, and friends of those memorialized there. Write both as introduction and a conclusion for this speech.

Learn More Online

Public-opinion polls may provide startling statistics for your conclusions. Check the following sites:

Gallup Gallup's famous public-opinion polls often yield interesting statistics.
www.gallup.com

The Cornell University Institute for Social and Economic Research
Link from there to several public-opinion survey organizations.
http://ciser.cornell.edu/info/polls.shtml

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Outlining and Editing Your Speech

11

"Every discourse ought to be a living creature, having a body of its own and head and feet; there should be a middle, a beginning, and end, adapted to one another and to the whole."

—Plato

OUTLINE

11.a Developing Your Preparation Outline
The Preparation Outline
Sample Preparation Outline

11.b Revising Your Speech
Revising Your Preparation Outline
Revising as You Rehearse

11.c Developing Your Delivery Outline and Speaking Notes
The Delivery Outline
Sample Delivery Outline
Speaking Notes

How much time do you spend preparing the speeches you give? And what percentage of your preparation time do you spend on the various individual tasks involved in the speechmaking process?

Communication researchers recently tried to determine the answers to these and related questions with a group of nearly one hundred college students.[1] Students kept journals throughout the semester in their public-speaking class, using the first few minutes of each class meeting to describe in writing what they had done since the last class to prepare for their next speech and to estimate how much time they had spent on each reported activity. When the researchers examined the students' journals, they discovered that, on average, students reported spending nearly half of their total preparation time on outlining and revising their speeches.

If you are like the students in the study, this chapter will be critical to your success as a speaker. Specifically, we will examine the purposes and requirements of three important tasks: (1) developing your preparation outline, (2) editing your speech, and (3) developing your delivery outline and speaking notes.

11.a Developing Your Preparation Outline

Although few speeches are written paragraph form, most speakers develop a detailed **preparation outline** that includes main ideas, subpoints, and supporting material. It may also include the specific purpose, introduction, blueprint, signposts, and conclusion. One CEO notes,

> Unless you sit down and write out your thoughts and put them in a cogent order, you can't deliver a cogent speech. Maybe some people have mastered that art. But I have seen too many people give speeches they really haven't thought out.[2]

The Preparation Outline

To begin your outlining task, you might try a technique known as **mapping**, or clustering. Write on a sheet of paper all the main ideas, subpoints, and supporting material for the speech. Then use geometric shapes and arrows to indicate the logical relationships among them, as shown in Figure 11.1.

Nationwide Insurance speechwriter Charles Parnell favors yet another technique for beginning an outline:

> I often start by jotting down a few ideas on the [computer] screen, then move them around as necessary to build some sort of coherent pattern. I then fill in the details as they occur to me.
>
> What that means is that you can really start anywhere and eventually come up with an entire speech, just as you can start with any piece of a puzzle and eventually put it together.[3]

Whatever technique you choose to begin your outline, your ultimate goal is to produce a plan that lets you judge the unity and coherence of your speech—to see how

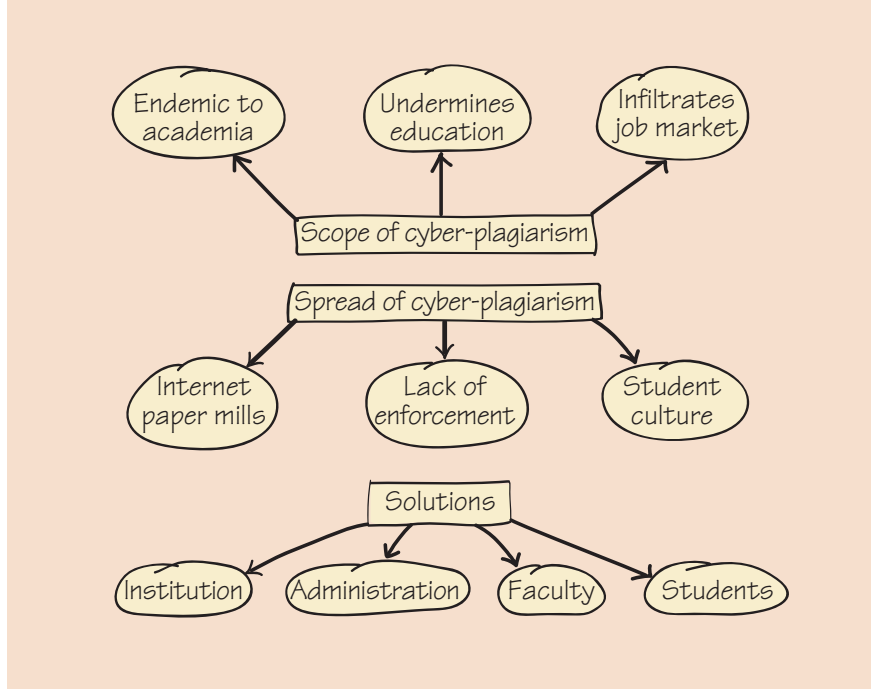

FIGURE 11.1 *A map that shows the relationships among each of a speaker's three main ideas and their subpoints. Main ideas are enclosed by rectangles; subpoints, by ovals. Supporting material could be indicated by another shape and connected to the appropriate subpoints.*

well the parts fit together and how smoothly the speech flows. Your finished preparation outline will help you to make sure that all main ideas and subpoints are clearly and logically related and adequately supported.

The following suggestions will help you to complete your preparation outline. However, keep in mind that different instructors may have different expectations for outline content and format. Be sure to understand and follow your own instructor's guidelines.

Write Your Preparation Outline in Complete Sentences Like Those You Will Use When Delivering Your Speech

Unless you write complete sentences, you will have trouble judging the coherence of the speech. Moreover, complete sentences will help during your early rehearsals. If you write cryptic phrases, you might not remember what they mean.

Use Standard Outline Form

Although you did not have to use standard outline form when you began to outline your ideas, you need to do so now. **Standard outline form** lets you see at a glance the exact relationships among various main ideas, subpoints, and supporting material in your speech. It is an important tool for evaluating

CORRECT OUTLINE FORM

Rule	Example
1. Use standard outline numbers and letters.	I. A. 1. a. (1) (a)
2. Use at least two subpoints, if any, for each main idea.	I. A. B.
3. Properly indent main ideas, subpoints, and supporting material.	I. First main idea A. First subpoint of I 1. First subpoint of A 2. Second subpoint of A B. Second subpoint of I II. Second main idea

FIGURE 11.2 *Use this summary as a reminder of the rules of proper outlining when you write your preparation outline.*

your speech as well as a requirement in many public-speaking courses. An instructor who requires speech outlines will generally expect standard outline form. To produce a correct outline, follow the instructions given here and summarized in Figure 11.2.

Use Standard Outline Numbers and Letters Logical and fairly easy to learn, outline numbering follows this sequence:

I. First main idea
   A. First subpoint of I
   B. Second subpoint of I
      1. First subpoint of B
      2. Second subpoint of B
         a. First subpoint of 2
         b. Second subpoint of 2
II. Second main idea

Although it is unlikely that you will subdivide beyond the level of lowercase letters (*a, b,* etc.) in most speech outlines, next would come numbers in parentheses and then lowercase letters in parentheses.

Use at Least Two Subdivisions, If Any, for Each Point Logic dictates that you cannot divide anything into one part. For example, if you have only one piece of supporting material, incorporate it into the subpoint or main idea that it supports. If you have only one subpoint, incorporate it into the main idea above it. Although there is no firm limit to the number of subpoints you may have, if there are more than five, you might want to place some of them under another point. An audience will remember your ideas more easily if they are divided into blocks of no more than five.

Indent Main Ideas, Points, Subpoints, and Supporting Material Properly Main ideas, indicated by Roman numerals, are written closest to the left margin. Notice that the periods following the Roman numerals line up, so the first words of the main ideas also line up.

I. First main idea
II. Second main idea
III. Third main idea

Letters or numbers of subpoints and supporting material begin directly underneath the first word of the point above.

I. First main idea
   A. First subpoint of I

If a main idea or subpoint takes up more than one line, the second line begins under the first word of the preceding line:

I. Every speech has three parts.
   A. The first part, both in our discussion and in actual delivery, is the introduction, which many speechwriters develop last.

The same rules of indentation apply at all levels of the outline.

Write and Label Your Specific Purpose at the Top of Your Preparation Outline Unless your instructor directs you to do otherwise, do not work the specific purpose into the outline itself. Instead, label it and place it at the top of the outline. Your specific purpose can serve as a yardstick by which to measure the relevance of each main idea, subpoint, and piece of supporting material. Everything in the speech should contribute to your purpose.

Add the Blueprint, Key Signposts, and an Introduction and Conclusion to Your Outline Place the introduction after the specific purpose, the blueprint immediately following the introduction, the conclusion after the outline of the body of the speech, and other signposts within the outline. Follow your instructor's guidelines for incorporating these elements into your numbering system.

Note that if you are using a word-processing program, you may find it easier to format your outline with the outlining feature turned off. The program's attempts to "help" you can be more frustrating than helpful and might cause you to make more errors in your outline than you would if you formatted it yourself.

Sample Preparation Outline

The sample outline on pages 224–226 is for a ten-minute persuasive speech by student speaker Karen Summerson.[4] Notice that in this example, the purpose, introduction, central idea, signposts, and conclusion are separated from the numbered points in the body of the speech. Be sure to learn and follow your instructor's specific requirements for incorporating these elements.

SAMPLE PREPARATION OUTLINE

PURPOSE

At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to take steps to ensure that they and their loved ones are driving on tires that are less than six years old.

Placing the purpose statement at the top of the outline helps the speaker to keep it in mind. But always follow your instructor's specific requirements for how to format your preparation outline.

INTRODUCTION

An ABC report dated May 9, 2008, tells the story of 19-year-old Andy Moore, who took a graduation trip to Canada. His parents had been careful to check the van, making sure everything was secure—taking usual precautions to guarantee a safe trip. Several days after Andy left, his father received a call that Andy had been in a deadly car accident. Andy did not die from drunk driving, carelessness, or by the fault of another person. As Andy was rounding a corner, the tread on a tire split and rolled off—a tire that had passed the inspection of a professional before this trip.

Karen catches her listeners' attention by opening her presentation with an illustration. Other strategies for effectively getting audience attention were discussed in Chapter 9.

According to the August 2003 edition of *Salon*, 204 million vehicles are driven each year in the United States by 191 million drivers. This means that 816 million tires are on the road, and we assume they will keep us safe.

To increase the impact of the *Salon* statistic, Karen explodes it, multiplying the number of vehicles on U.S. roads by 4 to yield the number of tires. Chapter 7 explains in greater detail why and how a speaker might explode or compact statistics.

CENTRAL IDEA

With safety on the line, it is important to ensure that we are driving on tires less than six years old.

PREVIEW

We must understand the problems, effects, and solutions related to driving on tires that are past their expiration dates.

Karen writes out and labels her central idea and preview, which together form the blueprint of her speech. Again, follow your instructor's requirements for what to include in and how to label the various components of your outline.

BODY OUTLINE

I. The problems are threefold.

A. We are driving on expired tires.

1. According to Ford, BMW, Chrysler, Toyota, VW/Audi manuals, and vehicular engineers, a tire is safe for only six years, even if it has not been driven on. According to the Chemistry of Rubber Processing and Disposal by Robert L. Bebb, elasticity has nothing to do with the shape or appearance of the tire but instead is determined by the chemistry of the rubber. Just like the elasticity in a rubber band diminishes over time, so do the moisture and elasticity in tires.

The first main point of the speech, which explores the problems associated with expired tires, is indicated by the Roman numeral I. It previews three subpoints, indicated by A, B, and C.

2. Out of 14,000 tires recently examined by teams from the Rubber Manufacturers Association, 40% of tires being sold as new were older than four years, and 0.5% of these were 15 years or older. That could mean more than 70 potentially fatal accidents.

Subpoints 1 and 2 provide supporting material, with oral citations, for A.

3. Compounding the problem is a lack of knowledge regarding printed birth dates on a tire. The four-digit number at the end of the sequence represent the week and year the tire was made. A tire with a code of 4202 was made in the 42nd week of 2002, making it more than six years old.

Karen compacts the statistic from the Rubber Manufacturers Association to yield the number of vehicles that might bear a "new" tire that is actually 15 years or older.

B. The second problem is that tire companies are not taking research seriously. These companies believe that technologies should make tire age obsolete; yet research shows that this is incorrect.

C. Finally, we are not being well-informed.

1. Even after federal legislation—called the Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation Act, or TREAD Act—was passed in 2000, tire makers did nothing to warn the public, law enforcement, or even the automotive industry about possible harms posed by old tires.

2. On February 28, 2002, Jeffrey Runge, Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, or NHTSA, shared with lawmakers legislation that prohibits a tire to be sold if it is not compliant with regulations. Since this address, the only change that has been made is that a tire's code is now printed on its outside-facing wall rather than its inside-facing wall.

(*continued*)

(*continued*)

3. When I recently had the oil changed in my car, I asked the mechanic if he could point out the code on the tire to me and tell me how old they were. He said my tires were six years old. He read the code incorrectly. They are 16 years old.

Karen uses a personal illustration to support the point that we are not well-informed about the age of our tires.

II. As well as putting the public in immediate danger, the continued use of tires beyond their expiration dates deters research into improvements in rubber technology, increasing the likelihood that the problem will persist.

Signpost. Now that we understand the problems and effects surrounding the issue of expired tires, it is important to better understand steps we can take to keep ourselves and those we love safe.

The signpost summarizes the problem and its effects, before Karen turns to solutions.

III. We can take at least three steps to protect ourselves and our friends and family from dangers associated with expired tires.
   A. The first and most practical solution is to take responsibility and check your tires.
   B. Second, question your mechanics and the companies you buy your tires from.
   C. Finally, tell your friends and family this life-saving information. Remind them to change their tires every six years, rotate their tires every 8,000 miles, and regularly check their tire pressure.

CONCLUSION

So today, we have looked at the problems, causes, and solutions surrounding tires and their lack of expiration dates. We, as forensics students, spend so much time on the road. Please check to make sure that you are safe so that you can continue doing something you love so much. By acting on this valuable information, you may prevent an accident that Andy Moore's parents could not.

In her conclusion, Karen first summarizes her main ideas, then reminds her audience why this problem concerns them. Finally, she returns to her opening illustration.

11.b Revising Your Speech

Once you have completed your preparation outline, you can use it to help analyze and possibly revise the speech. Your preparation outline is also essential in rehearsing, and perhaps further revising, your speech.

Revising Your Preparation Outline

After you have finished your preparation outline, take a thorough look at it to spot elements of the speech that you may want to revise. The How To box lists five key questions you should ask yourself as you look over your preparation outline. Having

considered those five questions, you are ready to rehearse your speech, using the preparation outline as your first set of notes. See Chapter 13 for additional tips on effective rehearsal.

HOW TO

Evaluate Your Speech Using Your Preparation Outline

Use these five questions to guide your critical thinking about how to revise your preparation outline:

- *Does the speech as outlined fulfill the purpose you have specified?* If not, you need to revise the specific purpose or change the direction and content of the speech itself.
- *Are the main ideas logical extensions (natural divisions, reasons, or steps) of the central idea?* If not, revise either the central idea or the main ideas.
- *Do the signposts enhance the comfortable flow of each idea into the next?* If not, change or add previews, summaries, or transitions.
- *Does each subpoint provide support for the point under which it falls?* If not, then either move or delete the subpoint.
- *Is your outline form correct?* For a quick reference, look at Figure 11.2.

Revising as You Rehearse

Audiences will forgive a speaker many speaking errors, but one of the hardest to forgive is speaking for too long. Although you want an appreciative audience, you don't want your listeners to break into applause out of relief that you have finally finished speaking. Often, when you rehearse using your preparation outline, you discover that you've got too much information. You have to cut your speech. Here are a few tips to help you revise a speech that is too long.[5]

- *Review your specific purpose.* Many speeches are too long because the speaker is trying to accomplish too much. With your audience in mind, take a hard look at your specific purpose statement. For example, if you want your audience to be able to list and describe five advantages of staying on standard time rather than switching to daylight savings time, you might have to decide on a less ambitious purpose and describe only three advantages, picking your best three.
- *Consider your audience.* You might be weary of this advice, but it is critical to consider your audience. What do audience members really need to hear? Go back over your speech outline, and take a hard look at it. Which parts of your message will be most and least interesting to your listeners? Cut the portions that are of least potential interest.
- *Keep only the best supporting material.* Your stories, illustrations, quotations, and other supporting material may be soaking up your time. Of course, stories and other types of supporting material help you to make your point and maintain interest, so you

don't want to reduce your speech to a bare bones outline. But do you need two stories to make your point, or will one do? Is there a shorter, more pithy quotation that will add punch and power to your prose? Scan your speech for supporting material that can be cut.

- *Look at your introduction and conclusion.* Your introduction should generally take up about 10 percent of your speaking time; another 10 percent should go to your conclusion. If either your introduction or your conclusion exceeds this guideline, try to shorten an illustration or summarize with greater brevity.
- *Ask a listener to help you cut.* It's often easier to have someone else help you cut material. Ask a friend or roommate to listen to your speech and help you note parts that are less powerful, clear, or convincing than others.

11.c Developing Your Delivery Outline and Speaking Notes

As you rehearse your speech, you will find that you need your preparation outline less and less. Both the structure and the content of your speech will become set in your mind. At this point, you are ready to prepare a delivery outline.

The Delivery Outline

A **delivery outline**, as the name implies, is meant to give you all that you will need to present your speech in the way you have planned and rehearsed. However, it should not be so detailed that it encourages you to read the outline rather than speak to your audience. Here are a few tips:

- *Make the outline as brief as possible, and use single words or short phrases rather than complete sentences.* That said, make certain the information is not so abbreviated that it becomes unclear. In August 2003, NASA blamed the loss of the Space Shuttle Columbia in part on the fact that an outline on possible wing damage was "so crammed with nested bullet points and irregular short forms that it was nearly impossible to untangle."[6]
- *Include the introduction and conclusion in much shortened form.* You might feel more comfortable if you have the first and last sentences written in full in front of you. Writing out the first sentence eliminates any fear of a mental block at the outset of your speech. And writing a complete last sentence ensures a smooth ending to your speech and a good final impression.
- *Include supporting material and signposts.* Write out statistics, direct quotations, and key signposts. Writing key signposts in full ensures that you will not grope awkwardly for a way to move from one point to the next. In the sample delivery outline on pages 229–230, notice the statistics and sources written out in the introduction and a transition written out at the juncture between II and III. After you have

rehearsed the speech several times, you will know where you are most likely to falter and can add or omit written transitions as needed.

- *Do not include your purpose statement in your delivery outline.*
- *Use standard outline form.* This will allow you to easily find the exact point or piece of supporting material you are seeking when you glance down at your notes.

Sample Delivery Outline

Note that the following delivery outline for Karen's speech on tire safety does not include a statement of the purpose and that the introduction and conclusion appear in shortened and bulleted list form.

SAMPLE DELIVERY OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- ABC, May 9, 2008—19-year-old Andy Moore, graduation trip to Canada. Parents checked van, usual precautions. Several days later, father received call re: accident. Not drunk driving, carelessness, or fault of another person—tread on a tire split & rolled off—a tire that had passed the inspection of a professional before this trip.
- *Salon*, August 2003—204 million vehicles/yr. in U.S., 191 million drivers = 816 million tires. Safe?

For the delivery outline, Karen does not need to write out her purpose statement, as she will not actually say it in her speech.

Karen reformats her introduction with bullets so that she will be able to see each part at a glance.

CENTRAL IDEA

With safety on the line, it is important to ensure that we are driving on tires less than 6 years old.

PREVIEW

1. Problems
2. Effects
3. Solutions

related to driving on tires that are past their expiration dates.

Karen includes and labels her initial preview and signposts throughout the outline so that she can find them quickly when she glances down while speaking.

BODY OUTLINE

I. Problems

A. Expired tires

1. Ford, BMW, Chrysler, Toyota, VW/Audi manuals & engineers—tire safe 6 yrs., even if not driven on. Chemistry of Rubber Processing and Disposal, Robert L. Bebb—elasticity
   - =/ shape or appearance of the tire, but
   - = chemistry of the rubber (rubber band)
2. 14,000 tires exam. by teams from Rubber Mfg. Assoc.—
   - 40% "new" tires > 4 yrs.
   - .5% of these > 15 yrs.
   - = > 70 fatal acc.

Although both main ideas and subpoints are shorter than in the preparation outline, source citations are still provided.

The shorthand of the delivery outline may include both abbreviations (such as "yr." and "no.") and symbols such as > or < for "more than" or "less than," @ for "at," and w/ for "with."

(*continued*)

(*continued*)

3. Printed birth dates on tire:
   - 4-digit no. = week & yr. tire was made.
   - 4202 = 42nd week/2002; = > 6 yrs.

B. Tire cos. not taking research seriously, think tech. = tire age obsolete; not true.

C. Not well inf.

1. Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation Act (TREAD), 2000—tire makers =/ warn public, law enf., or auto industry
2. ~~Feb. 28, 2002–Jeffrey Runge, Adm., Hwy Traffic Safety Admin (NHTSA) shared w/ lawmakers legislation that prohibits tire not complaint with regulations. Only change code now printed on outside facing wall rather than inside facing wall~~

In her revising process, Karen cut the reference to Jeffrey Runge, so she cuts it from her delivery outline as well. Her speaking notes will eliminate the reference altogether.

2. Oil change: Tires 6 yrs. old or 16?

II. Add. effects: research deterred

Signpost. Now that we understand the problems & effects surrounding the issue of expired tires, it is important to better understand steps we can take to keep ourselves & those we love safe.

III. 3 steps

A. Check tires.

B. ? mechanics & tire cos.

C. Family/friends:
   - Change tires every 6 yrs.
   - Rotate every 8,000 miles.
   - Check pressure.

CONCLUSION

- Looked @ problems, causes, & solutions
- Forensics students spend so much time on road: Check
- By acting on this valuable information, you may prevent an accident that Andy Moore's parents could not.

Karen writes out her final sentence to ensure that she can end her presentation fluently.

As you rehearse your speech, you will probably continue to edit the delivery outline. You might decide to make further cuts or to revise signposts. Your outline should provide just enough information to ensure smooth delivery. It should not burden you with unnecessary notes or tempt you to look down too often during the speech.

Speaking Notes

Many speakers find paper difficult to handle quietly, so they transfer their delivery outlines to note cards. Note cards are small enough to hold in one hand, if necessary, and stiff enough not to rustle. The How To box tells you how to make the best use of note cards.

HOW TO

Make Your Note Cards Work for You

- *Use as few cards as possible.* Two or three note cards will give you enough space for a delivery outline; the exact number of cards you use will depend on the length of your speech.
- *Make them readable.* Type or print your outline neatly on one side, making sure that the letters and words are large enough to read easily.
- *Divide your content logically.* You might find it helpful to use one note card for the introduction, one or two for the body, and one for the conclusion.
- *Plan ahead for switching from card to card.* Make sure that you do not have to shuffle note cards in midsentence.
- *Number the note cards.* This can prevent a fiasco if your notes get out of order.

Instead of using an outline, you might use an alternative format for your speaking notes. For example, you could use a map, or you could use a combination of words, pictures, and symbols. Winston Churchill formatted the speaking notes of the message with which he rallied the British people at the outset of World War II (his "Finest Hour" speech) as blank verse. The Director of the Churchill Archives Center observed that "because it looks like poetry, it gave him, I think, the rhythm that brought life to his oratory."[7] Whatever form your notes take, they should make sense to *you*.

A final addition to your speaking notes will be delivery cues and reminders, such as "Louder," "Pause," or "Move in front of podium." You could write your delivery cues in the margins by hand or, if the entire outline is handwritten, in ink of a different color. Several years ago, former President Gerald Ford accidentally read the delivery cue "Look into the right camera" during an address. Clearly differentiating delivery cues from speech content will help to prevent such mistakes.

STUDY GUIDE

Remember These Main Ideas

- The speech outlining process has three stages: (1) developing a preparation outline, (2) revising the speech, and (3) developing a delivery outline and speaking notes
- A detailed preparation outline should include main ideas, subpoints, and supporting material. It may also include the specific purpose, introduction, blueprint, signposts, and conclusion.
- To begin outlining, try a technique known as mapping or clustering. Write on a sheet of paper all the main ideas, subpoints, and supporting material for the speech.
- Write your preparation outline in complete sentences, like those you will use when delivering your speech.
- Use standard outline form, with standard outline numbers and letters and at least two subdivisions, if any, for each point.
- Write and label your specific purpose at the top of your preparation outline, and add the blueprint, key signposts, and an introduction and conclusion.
- Use your preparation outline to help analyze and revise the speech as you rehearse.
- Strategies for revising a speech that is too long include reviewing your specific purpose, considering your audience, keeping only the best supporting material, looking again at your introduction and conclusion, and asking a listener to help you cut.
- After you have rehearsed several times from the preparation outline and edited your speech if necessary, prepare a delivery outline.
- Continue to use standard outline form, but make the outline as brief as possible. Write single words or short phrases rather than complete sentences, and use short forms of the introduction and conclusion.
- Do not include your purpose statement in your delivery outline, but do include supporting material and signposts. Write out statistics, direct quotations, and key signposts.
- Consider using alternative formats, such as maps or combinations of words and pictures, in your speaking notes.

Understand These Key Terms

delivery outline (p. 228)

mapping (p. 220)

preparation outline (p. 220)

standard outline form (p. 221)

Think about These Questions

- Can a speaker legitimately claim that a speech is extemporaneous if he or she has constructed a detailed preparation outline? Explain your answer.
- Myorka thinks that it's silly to worry about using correct outline form for either her preparation outline or her delivery outline. Do you agree with her? Give at least two reasons for your answer.

Learn More Online

Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) Learn more about standard online format.
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/544/01/

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Using Words Well: Speaker Language and Style

12

"A speech is poetry; cadence, rhythm, imagery, sweep! A speech reminds us that words, like children, have the power to make dance the dullest beanbag of a heart."

—Peggy Noonan

OUTLINE

12.a Differentiating Oral and Written Language Styles

12.b Using Words Effectively
- Use Specific, Concrete Words
- Use Simple Words
- Use Words Correctly
- Use Words Concisely

12.c Adapting Your Language Style to Diverse Listeners
- Use Language That Your Audience Can Understand
- Use Appropriate Language
- Use Unbiased Language

12.d Crafting Memorable Word Structures
- Creating Figurative Images
- Creating Drama
- Creating Cadence
- Analyzing an Example of Memorable Word Structure

12.e Using Memorable Word Structures Effectively

Figure 12.1 shows several ads and headlines from the "Headlines" files of comedian Jay Leno.[1] As he notes, these are funny "because they were never intended to be funny in the first place. That they're checked and rechecked by a proofreader makes them funnier still." Certainly they illustrate that using language accurately, clearly, and effectively can be a challenge, even for professional writers.

For public speakers, the task is doubly challenging. One must speak clearly and communicate ideas accurately. At the same time, it is important to present those ideas in such a way that the audience will listen to, remember, and perhaps act on what the speaker has to say.

In this chapter, we will focus on the power of language. We will suggest ways to communicate your ideas and feelings to other people accurately and effectively. We will also discuss how the choice of words and word structures can help give your message a distinctive style.

FIGURE 12.1 *Sometimes our word choices are unintentionally amusing.*

12.a Differentiating Oral and Written Language Styles

Your instructor has probably told you not to write your speech out word for word. The professor has said this because of the differences between speaking and writing. There are at least three major differences between oral and written language styles:

- *Oral style is more personal than written style.* When speaking, you can look your listeners in the eye and talk to them directly. That personal contact affects your speech and your verbal style. As a speaker, you are likely to use more pronouns (*I, you*) than you would in writing. You are also more likely to address specific audience members by name.
- *Oral style is less formal than written style.* Memorized speeches usually sound as if they were written, because the words and phrases are longer, more complex, and more formal than those used by most speakers. Spoken communication, by contrast, is usually less formal, characterized by shorter words and phrases and less complex sentence structures. Speakers generally use many more contractions and colloquialisms than writers do. Oral language is also much less varied than written language is, with an average of only fifty words accounting for almost 50 percent of what we say. Finally, spoken language is often less precise than written language. Speakers are more likely than writers to use somewhat vague quantifying terms, such as *many, much,* and *a lot*.

  The personality of the speaker or writer, the subject of the discourse, the audience, and the occasion all affect the style of the language that is used. However, there are great variations within both oral and written styles. One speech may be quite personal and informal, whereas another may have characteristics more often associated with written style.
- *Oral style is more repetitive than written style.* When you don't understand something that you are reading in a book or an article, you can stop and reread a passage, look up unfamiliar words in the dictionary, or ask someone for help. When you're listening to a speech, those opportunities usually aren't available. For this reason, an oral style is and should be more repetitive.

  When you study how to organize a speech, you learn to preview main ideas in your introduction, develop your ideas in the body of the speech, and summarize these same ideas in the conclusion. You build in repetition to make sure that your listener will grasp your message. Even during the process of developing an idea, it is sometimes necessary to state it first, restate it in a different way, provide an example, and, finally, summarize it.

QUICK CHECK

Oral versus Written Style

Written style	• Less personal, with no immediate interaction between writer and reader • More formal • Less repetitive
Oral style	• More personal, facilitating interaction between speaker and audience • Less formal • More repetitive

12.b Using Words Effectively

As a speaker, your challenge is to use words well so that you can communicate your intended message. Ideally, language should be specific and concrete, simple, and correct. We'll discuss each of these factors.

Use Specific, Concrete Words

If you were to describe your pet snake to an audience, you would need to do more than say it is a serpent. Instead, you would want to use the most specific term possible, describing your snake as a ball python or, if you were speaking to an audience of scientists, perhaps as a *Python regius*. Specific words or terms such as *ball python* refer to individual members of a class of more general things such as *serpent* or *snake*.

Specific words are often concrete words, which appeal to one of our five senses, whereas general words are often abstract words, which refer to ideas or qualities. A linguistic theory known as *general semantics* holds that the more concrete your words, the clearer your communication. Semanticists use a "ladder of abstraction" to illustrate how something can be described in either concrete or abstract language. Figure 12.2 shows an example: The words are most abstract at the top of the ladder and become more concrete as you move down the ladder.

Specific, concrete nouns create memorable images, as in this speech delivered by a Wake Forest University student:

> Sometimes when I sleep, I can still hear the voices of my life—night crickets, lions' mating calls, my father's advice, my friend's laughter; I can still hear the voices of Africa.[2]

Specific, concrete verbs can be especially effective. The late Representative Barbara Jordan of Texas, whose language skills one speechwriter describes as "legendary," recognized the power of concrete verbs.[3] For example, the first draft of a passage in her 1992 Democratic National Convention keynote stated:

FIGURE 12.2 *Semanticists use a "ladder of abstraction" to show how a concept, idea, or thing can be described in either concrete or abstract terms.*

The American dream is not dead. It is injured, it is sick, but it is not dead.

Jordan revised the line to read:

The American dream is not dead. It is gasping for breath, but it is not dead.

The concrete verb phrase "gasping for breath" brings alive the image Jordan intended to create.

At the opposite end of the language spectrum from specific, concrete words is the **cliché**, an overused expression that may make listeners "start tuning out and completely miss the message."[4] A recent poll of five thousand people from some seventy countries found that the most annoying cliché was *at the end of the day*, followed by *at this moment in time*. Also on the list were *24/7, absolutely, awesome, ballpark figure,* and *I hear what you're saying*. Like most clichés, these phrases were at one time original and interesting, but their overuse has doomed them. Substitute specific, concrete words for clichés.

When searching for a specific, concrete word, you might want to consult a **thesaurus**. But in searching for an alternative word, do not feel that you have to choose the most obscure or unusual term to vary your description. Simple language can often evoke a vivid image for your listeners.

Use Simple Words

The best language is often the simplest. Your words should be immediately understandable to your listeners. Don't try to impress them with jargon and pompous language. Instead, as linguist Paul Roberts advises,

> Decide what you want to say and say it as vigorously as possible . . . and in plain words.[5]

In his classic essay "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell lists rules for clear writing, including this prescription for simplicity:

> Never use a long word where a short one will do. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.[6]

Record your practice sessions. As you review the recording, listen for chances to express yourself with simpler and fewer words. Used wisely, simple words communicate with great power and precision.

Use Words Correctly

> I was listening to the car radio one day when a woman reading the news referred to someone as a suede-o-intellectual. I pondered through three traffic lights until I realized she wasn't talking about shoes, but a pseudointellectual.[7]

A public speech is not the place to demonstrate your lack of familiarity with English vocabulary and grammar. In fact, your effectiveness with your audience depends in part on your ability to use the English language correctly. If you are unsure of the way to apply a grammatical rule, seek assistance from a good English usage handbook. If you are unsure of a word's pronunciation or meaning, use a dictionary.

Language operates on two levels, and perhaps the greatest challenge to using words correctly is remaining aware of connotations as well as denotations.

- *Denotation.* The **denotation** of a word is its literal meaning, the definition that you find in a dictionary. For example, the denotation of the word *notorious* is "famous."
- *Connotation.* The **connotation** of a word is not usually found in a dictionary but consists of the meaning we associate with the word, based on our past experiences. *Notorious* connotes fame resulting from some dire deed. *Notorious* and *famous* are not really interchangeable. It is just as important to consider the connotations of the words you use as it is to consider the denotations.

Sometimes connotations are personal. For example, the word *table* is defined denotatively as a piece of furniture consisting of a smooth, flat slab affixed on legs. But when you think of the word *table*, you might think of the old oak table your grandparents used to have; *table* may evoke for you an image of playing checkers with your grandmother. This is a private connotation of the word, a unique meaning based on your own past experiences. Private meanings are difficult to predict, but as a public

speaker, you should be aware of the possibility of triggering audience members' private connotations. This awareness is particularly important when you are discussing highly emotional or controversial topics.

Finally, if your audience includes people whose first language is not English, to whom the nuances of connotation might not be readily apparent, you might need to explain your intentions in more detail rather than relying on word associations.

Use Words Concisely

Consider these suggestions for getting to the point:

- *Eliminate phrases that add no meaning to your message.* Keeping your words concise helps your audience to follow your organization and can enhance your credibility. Here are some phrases you could always eliminate from your speech:

  In my opinion (just state the opinion)

  And all that (meaningless)

  When all is said and done (just say it)

  As a matter of fact (just state the fact)

  Before I begin, I'd like to say (you've already begun—just say it)

- *Avoid narrating your speaking technique.* There's no need to say, "Here's an interesting story that I think you will like." Just tell the story. Or why say, "I'd like to now offer several facts about this matter"? Just state the facts. Yes, it's useful to provide signposts and internal summaries throughout your message—redundancy is needed in oral messages—but be careful of providing cluttering narration about the techniques you're using.
- *Avoid long phrases when a short one will do.* The How To box suggests some phrases that you can make more succinct.

HOW TO

Avoid Long Phrases

Instead of saying . . .	Say . . .
So, for that reason	So
But at the same time	But
In today's society	Today
Due to the fact that	Because
In the course of	During
In the final analysis	Finally
In order to	To

12.c Adapting Your Language Style to Diverse Listeners

To communicate successfully with a diverse group of listeners, make sure your language is understandable, appropriate, and unbiased.

Use Language That Your Audience Can Understand

Even if you and all your public-speaking classmates speak English, you probably speak many varieties of the language. Perhaps some of your classmates speak in an **ethnic vernacular**, such as "Spanglish," a combination of English and Spanish that is often heard near the United States–Mexico border; Cajun, with its base of French words, frequently spoken in Louisiana; or the African American Vernacular English (AAVE). Some of you may reflect where you grew up by your use of **regionalisms**, words or phrases that are specific to one part of the country but rarely used in quite the same way in other places. Others of you may frequently use **jargon**, the specialized language of your profession or hobby.

If you give a speech to other people who share your ethnic, regional, or professional background, you can communicate successfully with them using these specialized varieties of English. However, if you give a speech to an audience as diverse as the members of your public-speaking class, where do you find a linguistic common ground?

The answer is to use standard U.S. English. **Standard U.S. English** is the language taught by schools and used in the media, business, and government in the United States. "Standard" does not imply that standard U.S. English is inherently right and all other forms are wrong, only that it conforms to a standard that most speakers of U.S. English will readily understand, even though they may represent a variety of ethnic, regional, and professional backgrounds.

Use Appropriate Language

Shortly after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney made remarks in which he referred to Pakistanis as "Paks." Although he was speaking admiringly of the Pakistani people, he was chided for his use of the term. The variation *Paki* is considered a slur, and *Pak* is only slightly less offensive. Columnist William Safire remarked, "Cheney probably picked up *Paks* in his Pentagon days, but innocent intent is an excuse only once; now he is sensitized, as are we all."[8]

A speaker whose language defames any subgroup—such as people of particular ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds or sexual orientations; women; or people with disabilities—or whose language might be otherwise considered offensive or risqué runs a great risk of antagonizing audience members. In fact, one study suggests that derogatory

language used to describe people with disabilities adversely affects an audience's perceptions of the speaker's persuasiveness, competence, trustworthiness, and sociability.[9]

Use Unbiased Language

Even speakers who would never dream of using overtly offensive language may find it difficult to avoid language that more subtly stereotypes or discriminates. Sexist language falls largely into this second category.

Consider, for example, the use of a masculine noun to refer generically to all people. The editors of *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition, consulted a usage panel of two hundred writers and scholars on such questions as whether the word *man* was acceptable as meaning "human" in some instances.[10] Only 58 percent of the women on the panel found such usage appropriate. To put it another way, if you were speaking to an audience of these distinguished women, you would offend 42 percent of them by using a phrase such as *modern man*. Although the word *man* is the primary offender, the How To box tells you how you can avoid some other common sources of subtly sexist language.

HOW TO

Avoid Sexist Language

- *Update outdated uses of masculine pronouns to refer people of unspecified gender.* Avoid sentences such as "Everyone should bring *his* book to class tomorrow," Instead, mention two genders ("Everyone should bring *his* or *her* book to class tomorrow"), or use a gender-neutral plural pronoun ("All students should bring *their* books to class tomorrow").
- *Monitor your use of nouns.* Instead of masculine terms such as *waiter, chairman, fireman,* and *Congressman*, choose such gender-neutral alternatives as *server, chair, firefighter,* and *member of Congress.*
- *Use parallel forms.* It is patronizing to mention the title of only one member of a group or couple, as in the sentence "President Barack Obama and Michelle have two daughters." To treat people equally, you can use the titles of both people: "President and Mrs. Obama have two daughters." You may also be able to use neither title: "Barack and Michelle Obama have two daughters."
- *Do not perpetuate stereotypes.* Saying, for example, "The *male nurse* took good care of his patients" implies that nursing is a typically female profession. You can clarify the sex of the nurse without the stereotype by simply saying, "The nurse took good care of his patients."

It is not always easy to avoid biased language. Even with good intentions and deliberate forethought, you can find yourself at times caught in a double bind. For example, suppose that Dr. Pierce is a young, black, female medical doctor. If you don't mention her age, race, and gender when you refer to her, you might reinforce your listeners' stereotypical image of a physician as middle-aged, white, and male. But if

you do mention these factors, you might be suspected of implying that Dr. Pierce's achievement is unusual. There is no easy answer to this dilemma or others like it. You will have to consider your audience, your purpose, and the occasion in deciding how best to identify Dr. Pierce.

As women and members of racial, ethnic, and other minorities have become increasingly visible in such professions as medicine, law, engineering, and politics, the public has grown to expect unbiased, inclusive language from news commentators, teachers, textbooks, and magazines—and from public speakers. Language that does not reflect these changes will disrupt your ability to communicate your message to your audience, which may well include members of the minority group to which you are referring.

12.d Crafting Memorable Word Structures

The President of the United States is scheduled to make an important speech in your hometown. You attend the speech and find his thirty-minute presentation both interesting and informative. In the evening, you turn on the news to see how the networks cover his address. All three major networks excerpt the same ten-second portion of his speech. Why? What makes certain portions of a speech quotable or memorable? Former presidential speechwriter Peggy Noonan has said:

> Great speeches have always had great sound bites. . . . They sum up a point, or make a point in language that is pithy or profound.[11]

In other words, memorable speeches are stylistically distinctive. They create arresting images. And they have what a marketing-communication specialist has termed ear appeal:

> "Ear appeal" phrases can be like the haunting songs of a musical that the members of the audience find themselves humming on the way home. Even if people want to forget them, they can't.[12]

Earlier in this chapter, we discussed the importance of using words that are concrete, unbiased, vivid, simple, and correct. In this section, we turn our attention to groups of words, or word structures—phrases and sentences that create the drama, figurative images, and cadences needed to make a speech memorable by giving it both "eye and ear appeal."[13]

Creating Figurative Images

One way to make your message memorable is to use figures of speech to create arresting images. A **figure of speech** deviates from the ordinary, expected meanings of words to make a description or comparison unique, vivid, and memorable. Common figures of speech include metaphors, similes, and personification.

Metaphors and Similes

A **metaphor** is an implied comparison of two things or concepts that are similar in some vital way. Writer Tim O'Brien used the metaphor of "two heads" to challenge a student audience to remain open-minded throughout their lives:

> You will carry on your shoulders multiple heads . . . Two heads can be the sign of a person attuned to world's pesky, irksome ambiguities and complexities and mysteries and unknowns.[14]

Whereas a metaphor is an implied comparison, a **simile** is a more direct comparison that includes the word *like* or *as*. In a March 2007 speech commemorating the Selma, Alabama, voting rights march of 1965, Barack Obama used a simile to compare the marchers to Moses, "Like Moses, they challenged Pharaoh. . . .[15]

Speakers often turn to metaphor and simile in times that are especially momentous or overwhelming—times when, as one speaker has said, "the ordinary diction of our lives finds itself unequal to a challenge."[16] In the hours and days after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, various speakers used such metaphorical phrases as "one more circle of Dante's hell," "nuclear winter," and "the crater of a volcano" to describe the site of the destroyed World Trade Center in New York.[17] Such language is often categorized as **crisis rhetoric**.

Personification

Personification is the attribution of human qualities to inanimate things or ideas. Franklin Roosevelt personified nature as a generous living provider in this line from his first inaugural address:

> Nature still offers her bounty and human efforts have multiplied it. Plenty is at our doorstep.[18]

Creating Drama

Another way in which you can make phrases and sentences memorable is to use them to create drama in your speech—to keep the audience members in suspense or to catch them slightly off guard by saying something in a way that differs from the way they expected you to say it.

- *Use a short sentence to express a vitally important thought.* We have already talked about the value of using short, simple words. Short, simple sentences can have much the same power. Columnist George F. Will pointed out that the most eloquent sentence in Lincoln's memorable second inaugural address is just four words long: "And the war came."[19]
- *Use omission: Leave out a word or phrase that the audience expects to hear.* When telegrams were a more common means of communication, senders tried to use as few words as possible because they were charged by the word and the more they could leave out, the cheaper the telegram was. But the words you leave out must be understood by your listeners or readers. For example, a captain of a World War II Navy destroyer used **omission** to inform headquarters of his successful efforts at sighting and sinking an enemy submarine. He spared all details when he cabled back to headquarters: "Sighted sub—sank same." Using as few words as possible, he

communicated his message in a memorable way. About two thousand years earlier, another military commander informed his superiors in Rome of his conquest of Gaul with the economical message "I came, I saw, I conquered." That commander was Julius Caesar.

- *Use inversion: Reverse the normal word order of a phrase or sentence.* John F. Kennedy used **inversion** by changing the usual subject–verb–object sentence pattern to object–subject–verb in this brief declaration from his inaugural speech:

  This much we pledge. . . .[20]

- *Use suspension: Place a key word or phrase at the end of a sentence rather than at the beginning.* When you read a mystery novel, you are held in suspense until you reach the end and learn "who done it." The stylistic technique of verbal **suspension** does something similar. Barack Obama employed suspension to emphasize the verb do in his inaugural address declaration, "All this we can do. All this we will do."[21]

Advertisers use the technique of suspension frequently. A few years ago, the Coca-Cola Company used suspension as the cornerstone of its worldwide advertising campaign. Rather than saying "Coke goes better with everything," the copywriter decided to stylize the message by making *Coke* the last word in the sentence. The slogan became "Things go better with Coke." Again, the stylized version was more memorable because it used language in an unexpected way and left the product name as the last, most memorable word.

Creating Cadence

Even very small children can memorize nursery rhymes and commercial jingles with relative ease. As we grow older, we may make up rhythms and rhymes to help us remember such facts as "Thirty days hath September, April, June, and November" and "Red sky at night/A sailor's delight." Why? Rhythms are memorable. The public speaker can take advantage of language rhythms, not by speaking in singsong patterns, but by using such stylistic devices as repetition, parallelism, antithesis, and alliteration.

- *Repetition* **Repetition** of a key word or phrase gives rhythm and power to your message and makes it memorable. Perhaps the best-known modern example of repetition in a speech is Martin Luther King Jr.'s ringing declaration, "I have a dream." Repeated eight times in King's August 28, 1963, speech at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., the phrase became the title by which the speech is best known.

- *Parallelism* Whereas *repetition* refers to using identical words, **parallelism** refers to using different words but the identical grammatical patterns. When he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in 2009, President Obama used parallel grammatical structures to express optimism:

  We can acknowledge that oppression will always be with us, and still strive for justice. We can admit the intractability of depravation and still strive for dignity. We can understand that there will be war, and still strive for peace.[22]

The three sentences that begin with "We can acknowledge," "We can admit," and "We can understand" follow the same grammatical pattern of *pronoun (We) + two verb phrases*.

- *Antithesis* The word *antithesis* means "opposition." A sentence that uses **antithesis** has two parts with parallel structures but contrasting meanings. Speakers have long realized the dramatic potential of antithesis. In his first inaugural address, Franklin Roosevelt declared,

  > Our true destiny is not to be ministered unto but to minister to ourselves and to our fellow men.[23]

Hillary Clinton used antithesis in a speech delivered during her 2008 campaign for the presidential nomination:

> In the end the true test is not the speeches a president delivers, it's whether the president delivers on the speeches.[24]

Antithesis is not restricted to politicians. When William Faulkner accepted the Nobel Prize for literature in 1950, he spoke the following now famous antithetical phrase:

> I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail.[25]

An antithetical statement is a good way to end a speech. The cadence that it creates will make the statement memorable.

- *Alliteration* **Alliteration** is the repetition of a consonant sound (usually an initial consonant) several times in a phrase, clause, or sentence. Alliteration adds cadence to a thought. Consider these examples:

Alliterative Phrase	Speaker	Occasion
discipline and direction	Franklin Roosevelt	First inaugural address[26]
confidence and courage	Franklin Roosevelt	First fireside chat[27]
disaster and disappointment	Winston Churchill	Speech urging British resistance[28]
virility, valour, and civic virtue	Winston Churchill	Speech to U.S. Congress[29]
friends and former foes	Barack Obama	Inaugural address[30]

Used sparingly, alliteration can add cadence to your rhetoric.

QUICK CHECK

Crafting Memorable Word Structures

Word Structures with Figurative Imagery

Metaphor	Makes an implied comparison of two similar things or concepts
Simile	Compares directly by using the word *like* or *as*
Personification	Attributes human qualities to inanimate things or ideas

Word Structures with Drama

Short sentence	Emphasizes an important idea
Omission	Boils an idea down to its essence by leaving out understood words
Inversion	Reverses the expected order of words and phrases
Suspension	Places a key word at the end of a phrase or sentence

Word Structures with Cadence

Repetition	Repeats a key word or phrase several times for emphasis
Parallelism	Uses the same grammatical pattern in several sentences or phrases
Antithesis	Uses parallel structures but opposing meanings in two parts of a sentence
Alliteration	Uses the same consonant sound several times in a phrase, clause, or sentence

Analyzing an Example of Memorable Word Structure

We would like to illustrate all seven techniques for creating drama and cadence with one final example.[31] If you asked almost anyone for the most quoted line from John F. Kennedy's speeches, that line would probably be "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country" from his inaugural address. Besides expressing a noble thought, this line is so quotable because it uses all seven stylistic techniques.

- *Omission and inversion.* "Ask not . . ." is an example of omission. The subject, *you*, is not stated. "Ask not" is also an example of inversion. In casual everyday conversation, we would usually say "do not ask" rather than "ask not." The inversion makes the opening powerful and attention-grabbing.
- *Suspension.* The sentence also employs the technique of suspension. The key message of the phrase, "ask what you can do for your country," is suspended, or delayed, until the end of the sentence. If the sentence structure had been reversed, the impact would not have been as dramatic. Consider: "Ask what you can do for your country rather than what your country can do for you."
- *Repetition.* Kennedy employed the technique of repetition by using a form of the word *you* four times in a sentence of seventeen words. In fact, he used only eight different words in his seventeen-word sentence. Just one word in the entire sentence, *not*, occurs only once.
- *Parallelism and antithesis.* Kennedy also used parallelism and antithesis. The sentence is made up of two clauses with parallel construction, one in opposition to the other.

- *Alliteration.* Finally, Kennedy added alliteration to the sentence with the words *ask, can,* and *country*. The alliterative *k* sound is repeated at more or less even intervals.

Although the passage that we have analyzed does not include any figurative images, the speech from which it comes does have some memorable figurative language, most notably metaphors such as "chains of poverty," "beachhead of cooperation," and "jungle of suspicion." Kennedy used figurative imagery, drama, and cadence to give his inaugural address "eye and ear appeal" and make it memorable—not just to those who heard it initially, but also to those of us who hear, read, and study it more than fifty years later. The How To box reviews language structures that you can craft to make your own speech memorable.

HOW TO

Create Figurative Images, Drama, and Cadence

- Make an implied comparison (metaphor).
- Compare by using the word *like* or *as* (simile).
- Attribute human qualities to inanimate things or ideas (personification).
- Use a short sentence to express a vitally important thought.
- Omit understood words to reduce an idea to its essence.
- Reverse the expected order of words and phrases (inversion).
- Place a key word or idea at the end of a sentence (suspension).
- Repeat a key word or phrase several times for emphasis (repetition).
- Use the same grammatical pattern in several sentences or phrases (parallelism).
- Use parallel structures but opposing meanings in two parts of a sentence (antithesis).
- Use the same consonant sound several times in a phrase, clause, or sentence (alliteration).

12.e Using Memorable Word Structures Effectively

Having reviewed ways to add style and interest to the language of your speech, we must now consider how best to put those techniques into practice.

- *Use distinctive stylistic devices sparingly.* Even though we have made great claims for the value of style, do not overdo it. Including too much highly stylized language can put the focus on your language rather than on your content.
- *Use stylistic devices at specific points in your speech.* Save your use of stylistic devices for times during your speech when you want your audience to remember your

key ideas or when you wish to capture their attention. Some kitchen mixers have a "burst of power" switch to help churn through difficult mixing chores with extra force. Think of the stylistic devices that we have reviewed as opportunities to provide a burst of power to your ideas. Use them in your opening sentences, statements of key ideas, and conclusion.

- *Use stylistic devices to economize*. When sentences become too long or complex, try to recast them with antithesis or suspension. Also, consider the possibility of omission.

STUDY GUIDE

Remember These Main Ideas

- Carefully select and use words to give your ideas maximum impact.
- Understand the differences between the way people talk and the way they write. Oral style is more personal, less formal, and more repetitive than written style.
- Words should be specific, concrete, and simple and should be used correctly. Understand the connotations of words, as well as their denotations.
- Adapt your language style to diverse listeners. Use language that your listeners can understand, use appropriate language to avoid offending them, and use unbiased language to communicate in a sensitive way to subgroups.
- Create arresting images with figures of speech, including metaphors, similes, and personification.
- Another way in which you can make phrases and sentences memorable is to use them to create drama in your speech—to keep the audience in suspense or to catch them slightly off guard by saying something in a way that differs from the way they expected you to say it.
- Short sentences, like short, simple words, help you to emphasize vitally important thoughts.
- Omission leaves out a word or phrase that the audience expects to hear. Inversion reverses the normal word order of a phrase or sentence. Suspension places a key word or phrase at the end of a sentence rather than at the beginning.
- Create cadence by taking advantage of language rhythms not by speaking in singsong patterns, but by using such stylistic devices as parallelism, antithesis, repetition, and alliteration.
- Use distinctive stylistic devices sparingly, to emphasize specific points in your speech or to economize.

Understand These Key Terms

alliteration (p. 247)
antithesis (p. 247)
cliché (p. 239)
connotation (p. 240)
crisis rhetoric (p. 245)
denotation (p. 240)
ethnic vernacular (p. 242)
figure of speech (p. 244)
inversion (p. 246)
jargon (p. 242)
metaphor (p. 245)
omission (p. 245)
parallelism (p. 246)
personification (p. 245)
regionalisms (p. 242)
repetition (p. 246)
simile (p. 245)
standard U.S. English (p. 242)
suspension (p. 246)
thesaurus (p. 239)

Think about These Questions

- Louis Howe, an aide to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, is now thought to have written the famous line from Roosevelt's first inaugural address: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Is it ethical to credit Roosevelt with this line? Why or why not?
- In recent years, people have become increasingly conscious of the ways in which our language gives the impression that we are referring only to men when it is more appropriate to refer to both men and women. Has political correctness gotten out of hand? Are we becoming too sensitive to gender issues in our public dialogue? Or are we not sensitive enough? Explain your answer.

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www.merriam-webster.com

Your Dictionary provides a collection of specialty dictionaries and thesauruses.
www.yourdictionary.com

The Rhyme Zone, can help you find a rhyming word.
www.rhymezone.com

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